

October 2008

IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM 1 OCTOBER 2008 FOR CENTRES DELIVERING OCR TEXT PROCESSING (BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL)

Accessibility in Text Processing (Business Professional) Units

As a result of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), OCR has been reviewing its vocational access arrangements. In January, we advised centres that the implications of the Act changed the arrangements for the Text Processing suite and these were applied accordingly.

This notice is to remind centres that the changes will also apply to the new Text Processing (Business Professional) suite of qualifications which are launched on 1 October 2008.

Background

The DDA requires us, as a qualification awarding body, to make reasonable adjustments for candidates with disabilities as defined under the Act.

In discussions with the regulators, government agencies and qualification body colleagues, although not all the issues arising from the DDA are yet resolved, two particular points are clear:

- Reasonable adjustments do not include any adjustment which might impact on the competence standards being tested. This means, therefore, that there is no duty on the qualifications body to make any adjustment in respect of the application of a competence standard.
- Certificate indications will not be acceptable in vocational qualifications.

We are therefore issuing this notice on the understanding that this is the current position for vocational qualifications in 2008 -2009.

Impact on OCR's new Text Processing (Business Professional) Units

Use of software

We have developed several new units.

Four new Text Production units, to meet both the requirements of accessibility and competence standards, have been developed specifically for use with dictated text and screen reader software. Consideration has been given to the additional time the use of a screen reader and dictation will take, when compared with using handwritten drafts.

These new units are not "disability units" but available to everyone.

Time allowance, adaptations and certificate indications

As a result of the DDA and since January 2008 we have no longer offered certificate indications when candidates cannot complete a test in the time specified as an assessment objective in the qualification. This will continue with the Text Processing (Business Professional) qualifications launched on 1 October 2008.

Please note that, from 1 October 2008, for the Text Processing (Business Professional) units:

- candidates will not be allowed any extra time
- certificate indications will not be placed on certificates
- adapted papers will no longer be available

If you need further explanation please contact us, either by fax: 01223 553051, or telephone the OCR Customer Contact Centre on 024 7685 1509 and choose Option 5 (General Enquiries).