

This document contains three related policies adopted in July 2018:

- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
- **Access to Fair Assessment Statement**
- **Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy.**

CiLCA is the Certificate in Local Council Administration, the specific Level 3 qualification for officers of parish, town and community (or local) councils. The SLCC is responsible for the administration of CiLCA on behalf of the Improvement & Development Board (IDB). The IDB represents bodies responsible for the development of local councils including the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Local Government Association, the National Association of Local Councils and the SLCC.

The SLCC staff, all independent trainers involved in the management, assessment and quality assurance of Ascentis' qualifications and all candidates should be fully aware of these policies. All individuals must ensure that the policies are implemented. The three policies were adopted in July 2018; they were reviewed in January 2021 and will be reviewed again in January 2023 unless significant changes are introduced by legislation or Ascentis.

Equality & Diversity Policy

On behalf of the IDB, the SLCC ensures that candidates for CiLCA have a right to freedom from all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination on the grounds of age, class, gender, gender reassignment, race, nationality or citizenship, ethnicity, religion or belief, political persuasion, disability, HIV status, marital status and sexuality. The SLCC will take every step possible to ensure that each candidate is treated fairly and equally and that qualification decisions are based solely on an objective assessment of evidence. The SLCC will prevent any unreasonable or unfair treatment which places people at a disadvantage for any reason.

The SLCC will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation or abuse of either candidates or staff throughout the CiLCA experience.

The SLCC is committed to implementing [Ascentis Equality & Diversity Policy](#) which explains relevant legislation in detail.

CiLCA is a professional qualification for all officers working with local councils. Most candidates are employed by local councils and are engaging in CiLCA as a consequence of that employment. Employers are normally a public sector bodies committed to their own equality and diversity policies. CiLCA is flexible enough to suit candidates from the diversity of local councils.

The Portfolio Guide (2016) contains the following statement (pp4-5):

The sector bodies wish to make CiLCA equally accessible to all but you need access to council documents and, if necessary, permission from the officers responsible to use them for CiLCA. If you are not linked to a specific council you are advised to find a council willing to provide appropriate documents. If you have a registered condition (such as dyslexia or visual impairment) that might affect your ability to create your portfolio, you should notify the CiLCA Administrator who identifies appropriate advice or support. For example, a candidate with a visual impairment could provide an audio commentary for the portfolio. The Portfolio Guide is published in both English and Welsh and candidates can submit a portfolio in either language.

Access to Fair Assessment Statement

The assessment plan is written by the SLCC (the professional body) based on a set of approved occupational standards. It is approved by the IDB and published in The Portfolio Guide (2016). There are thirty learning outcomes with assessment criteria and guidance on the evidence for demonstrating achievement. The evidence is submitted via an e-portfolio and includes written explanations and annotations of professional documents. This strategy is appropriate for the profession. The assessment plan is subject to a major review every five years with minor updates as required by changes in legislation.

The policy on Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations (below) is in place to ensure access to fair assessment. This reflects the needs of individual candidates while ensuring that the assessment enables a valid, reliable and consistent judgement to be made about the achievement of learning outcomes against assessment criteria. The assessment strategy, appropriate for the specific professional qualification, is published in The Portfolio Guide (2016).

Assessors

The assessors

- are trained and qualified to assess
- undertake an induction to understand the specific assessment strategy and principles of assessment
- undertake a period of probation where *all* assessment is verified
- record the outcomes of all assessment activities
- provide clear and constructive feedback to all candidates mapped against achievement of the learning outcomes and assessment criteria

The Internal Quality Assurance Verifier

- ensures that all assessors are properly inducted and serve an appropriate probationary period and provides continuing professional development for assessors
- holds standardisation meetings to ensure that all assessors are consistent in their approach to assessment
- ensures that assessor records are accurate, clear and up to date
- ensures that assessor feedback to learners is clear, constructive, unambiguous and related to the assessment criteria
- verifies 20% of all assessment decisions to ensure that decisions are valid

- provides written feedback to assessors on all aspects of the assessment process
- ensures that all quality improvement recommendations are monitored and any resulting actions are implemented

Candidates are informed of the assessment methodology in the Portfolio Guide. The Guide includes the appeals policy, the detailed assessment plan and an explanation of time constraints and extensions. Candidates receive feedback on their submission for each unit within three weeks (or six weeks if their submission is verified by the IQA verifier). Candidates are expected to produce work written to a professional standard.

Reasonable Adjustments & Special Considerations Policy

1 Introduction

The purpose of reasonable adjustments and special consideration requests is to enhance access to qualifications for candidates with disabilities and other difficulties, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge understanding or competence being assessed. This policy is aligned with guidance from Ascentis, the awarding body.

This policy outlines:

- our arrangements for making reasonable adjustments and special considerations in relation to CiLCA
- how candidates qualify for reasonable adjustments and special considerations
- the reasonable adjustments the SLCC will permit
- the SLCC's responsibilities in respect of reasonable adjustments

It should be noted that all candidates are, or are qualifying to be, local council officers in England or Wales able to carry out a management role including the management of staff, facilities and events. It is therefore unlikely that a council would employ someone unable to complete the assessment in English or Welsh as appropriate or requiring a sign language interpreter, a reader or documents in Braille. Furthermore, candidates are submitting their work for assessment from home or at work and are using their own or their employers' IT equipment. CiLCA is available in Welsh and an assessor who can assess work in Welsh is employed by the SLCC.

2 Policy Overview

Ascentis and the SLCC are committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation in relation to the development and delivery of CiLCA and, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. We seek to uphold rights relating to race relations, disability discrimination and special educational needs of our candidates and to provide equal reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all candidates registered for CiLCA. The SLCC also has a fair access to assessment policy reflecting the following principles and guidelines.

Assessment is a fair test of candidates' knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some candidates the EMMA format for assessment may not be suitable. The provision for reasonable adjustments is made to ensure that candidates receive recognition of their

achievement so long as the equity, validity and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are not concessions to make assessment easier for candidates, nor advantages to give candidates a head start.

- Reasonable adjustments may be required for the assessment of CiLCA where candidates have a permanent disability or specific learning needs that affect their ability to write documents and post them into their e-portfolio. Reasonable adjustments are available for candidates who present particular requirements prior to assessment.

Candidates who are affected by temporary illness, medical condition, injury, indisposition or learning needs affecting their ability to meet the one-year deadline for CiLCA submission, are able to request an extension from the CiLCA Administrator (see The Portfolio Guide for details). All candidates must submit a complete portfolio of evidence as the qualification is evidence of professional competence.

3 The process for requesting reasonable adjustments

The SLCC offers candidates the opportunity to declare a permanent disability or specific learning needs that affect their ability to write documents and post them into their e-portfolio at registration, in course documentation and at training events. Such candidates should be identified as soon as possible. If the SLCC decides to make a reasonable adjustment, it identifies whether it needs to seek approval from Ascentis (see below). If not, then the form 'Reasonable Adjustments permitted by the Centre without the prior approval of Ascentis' (available on the Ascentis website) must be completed and retained, along with evidence of need.

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled candidate to demonstrate his or her knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve:

- allowing a candidate an extra three months to complete the submission of CiLCA
- providing the opportunity to submit work using the spoken word
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software
- permitting the candidate to submit a hard copy portfolio

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place. This means that the candidate's one-year window for submitting work for assessment starts when the reasonable adjustment is in place provided this is a technical adjustment. Reasonable adjustments constitute an arrangement to give the candidate access to assessment. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work.

Both Ascentis and the SLCC are only required by law to do what is 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable will depend on the individual circumstances, cost

implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment. Other factors, such as the need to maintain competence standards and health and safety, will also be taken into consideration.

The SLCC will determine whether prior approval to apply a reasonable adjustment is required from Ascentis. The table below lists the circumstances where prior approval is not required. This is broadly in line with JCQ guidelines and has been introduced to streamline processes and cut out unnecessary bureaucracy. If the SLCC applies any of the reasonable adjustments listed it should ensure the form Reasonable Adjustments permitted by the Centre without the prior approval of Ascentis (available on the Ascentis website) is completed and retained, along with evidence of need. This documentation should be made available to Ascentis on request.

Reasonable adjustment	Evidence that a candidate is eligible
Allowing a candidate an extra three months to complete the submission of CiLCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of special education needs • Psychological assessment carried out by a qualified psychologist • Specialist assessment carried out by specialist teacher • Medical report
Providing the opportunity to submit work using the spoken word	This is the candidate's normal way of working for his/her employer.
Using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software	This is the candidate's normal way of working for his/her employer.
Permitting the candidate to submit a hard copy portfolio	Medical report

The reasonable adjustments or modifications requiring the approval of Ascentis are not applicable to the form of assessment used for CiLCA. The assessment programme cannot be modified.

If a candidate wishes to appeal against a decision to decline requests for reasonable adjustments, they refer to the SLCC's appeals policy set out in The Portfolio Guide.

For further information, please contact the Head of Conferences, Training and Education at the SLCC: E-Mail cilca@slcc.co.uk Tel: 01823 253646

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