

TERTIARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

TVE Circular 09/2023

Implementing Reasonable Adjustments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training Delivery for Persons with Disabilities

In the National Policy on Technical and Vocational Education and Training and the National Strategy on TVET Provision for Vulnerable People in Sri Lanka, persons with disabilities are explicitly identified as one of the vulnerable and disadvantaged groups who require immediate attention from the TVET system, on the basis of their vulnerability from the point of view of employability due to limited access to skills training. Enrolment of persons with disabilities in NVQ training courses remains limited, and without the provision of reasonable adjustments, persons with disabilities are unable to actively participate and benefit from these training programs.

Registered Training Providers who conduct accredited courses leading to the award of National Vocational Qualifications are hereby instructed to adhere to the requirements of this circular with effect from 29 August 2023. The focus of this circular is on the implementation of reasonable adjustments in training and on-the-job training to accommodate trainees with diverse disabilities. These adjustments aim to facilitate their access to information, enhance their participation in theoretical and practical training sessions, and enable them to effectively demonstrate their learning. It is important to note that reasonable adjustments do not entail any modifications to the training curriculum itself or the units of competency; rather, they pertain to adapting the teaching methods employed and providing necessary tools to ensure equity in participation.

The adjustments implemented must meet the criteria of being "reasonable" which means that they should be practical, feasible within the training environment and the resources available. Additionally, these adjustments should align with modifications that the industry could reasonably provide to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. Registered Training Providers should refrain from using the notion of "reasonableness" as a way to deny necessary adjustments, but rather strive to find innovative and practical solutions that enable individuals with diverse disabilities to fully engage in their learning and training experiences.

Registered Training Providers are hereby required to indicate the type and nature of the disability, if any, of students whom they include in the TVEC's web based NVQ information system at the time they do batch entry of students. The providers shall fill in the disability information at the time of registering the students to the TVEC online information system for reference of the assessors and others concerned.

Specifically, the Registered Training Providers and Trainers shall adhere to the following practices:

1. Reasonable Adjustments during Enrolment:

Registered Training Providers must include a clear statement in their messaging, encouraging persons with disabilities to apply and assuring them that their needs will be accommodated to the best extent possible. Providers must ensure that their messaging is accessible in different formats, such as large print, electronic text, audio recordings, or captioned videos, to effectively reach and engage individuals with diverse disabilities.

Applicants will be encouraged to disclose information about their disability during the enrolment process, along with evidence about the nature and impact of the disability (e.g. disability certificate, medical report, disability allowance related documents, or any other relevant supporting documentation). Disclosing disability is a pre-requisite for determining whether reasonable adjustments can be implemented to assist the applicant in successfully following and completing the course.

Applicants with disabilities are to be provided with a briefing, ensuring their clear understanding of the theoretical and practical course requirements, the ways in which reasonable adjustments can support their learning experience, and emphasizing that the provision of adjustments does not guarantee successful course completion; applicants are still required to demonstrate knowledge and skills in all tasks related to the occupation. By providing this information beforehand, applicants with disabilities will be equipped with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their enrolment.

2. Reasonable Adjustments during Training:

The Trainer is required to engage in consultation with the student with a disability and, if applicable, with their family member to determine the necessary adjustments that need to be made, while maintaining the integrity of the content delivery and achieving necessary competencies. This consultation process may take several meetings to ensure effective planning.

The Trainer shall proceed to develop an “Individualized Reasonable Adjustment Plan” in accordance with the template provided in Annexure I. This plan will outline the specific difficulties experienced by the student and the corresponding adjustments required for each unit of competency. Its implementation will be closely monitored and may be subject to revisions over time to better address the evolving needs of the student.

3. Types of Reasonable Adjustments during Training:

Types of Reasonable Adjustments	Details of Adjustments
Communication Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional Explanations and Clarifications• Utilization of Visual Aids• Hands-on Demonstrations
Adapted Teaching Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breaking Tasks into Small Steps• Incorporating Task Repetitions• Regular Checks for Task Completion

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking Feedback from Students with Disabilities to improve effectiveness of future training sessions
Learning by Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifting from classroom to work-based training opportunities to promote hands-on learning approach in real-world settings • Assigning mentors or supervisors to provide guidance and support during workplace training • Adapting the duration of the training for students with disabilities to learn at their own pace
Alternative Communication Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign Language, Lip Reading, Written Notes • Visual Symbols and Color-Coding • Leveraging Body Language such as eye contact, facial expressions and hand gestures • Clear and Simplified Language
Support Personnel and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Sign Language Interpreters • Offering Readers and Note-Takers • Assigning Peer Buddies
Accessible Learning Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative Formats such as large print, Braille, electronic text or audio recordings • Captioned Course Videos
Assistive Technology and Adapted Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Assistive Devices • Access to Adapted Occupation-related Tools for Practical Tasks
Time Accommodation & Rest Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocating a minimum of 25% of additional time for completing assignments, assessments or examinations • Providing short rest periods as needed to support the student's wellbeing and performance
Physical Environment Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier-Free Access and navigation within the Training Venue • Adjusting Lighting, Seating Arrangements or Noise Levels

It is important to note that these are general examples of reasonable adjustments and may vary depending on the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. Training providers should assess and implement appropriate adjustments on a case-by-case basis to meet the unique requirements of each trainee.

Reasonable Adjustments should meet the individual needs of students with disabilities rather than providing a generic response to a type of disability. It cannot be assumed that what works for a person with a disability during training will work for another person with the same type of disability. Trainers are requested to adapt innovative and progressive practices to best fit the purpose and situation.

4. Types of Reasonable Adjustments during On-the-Job Training (OJT):

The following table provides a comprehensive yet non-exhaustive compilation of essential adjustments that an Employer should put in place in the workplace when supervising and guiding a trainee with a disability during their on-the-job training (OJT). This list complements the adjustments applicable during the training process, as outlined in Section 3 of the present circular.

Types of Reasonable Adjustments during OJT	Details of Adjustments
Understand disability and what your trainee with a disability needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not make assumptions about what the trainee can do well/not do well, especially based on his or her disability. • Never assume that just because a friend, a co-worker or a family member has the same type of disability that the needs of the trainee you're talking to are the same. • Simply ask your trainee and listen to what support he or she wants from you.
Improve disability inclusion culture in your workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide basic disability awareness and etiquette tips to your co-workers so they can interact with the trainee with respect and consideration. • After you know the trainee a little, ask whether he or she will be willing to talk about his or her disability. Some people really appreciate the opportunity to talk about their disability and educate others about disability issues, and others don't like to talk about it at all. • Explain the concept of 'reasonable adjustment' to the co-workers and inform them about the type of adjustments provided to the trainee. This can reduce the perceptions of unfairness and avoid potential inappropriate behaviors from some employees.
Encourage your trainee with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat your trainee just like anyone else you may mentor. Do not patronize him or her (treating like a child) because of his or her disability. • Keep up the motivation of the trainee by remaining supportive and displaying positive attitude. • Let your trainee know how he or she can reach you in case of problems encountered in the workplace (conflict with a co-worker, harassment, etc.).
Enhance your trainee's performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an experienced co-worker who can act as a 'buddy' during the training process and supplement your role as mentor. • While he or she may do things differently than others to complete a task, expect the same level of performance from your trainee. Lowering a competency standard is not a reasonable adjustment and will contribute towards reinforcing the prevalent negative perceptions about the capacities of people with disabilities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your trainee identify and request effective adjustments to meet the course requirements. • Monitor and review adjustments in the workplace to support improvement and/or resolve performance issues. • Give your trainee plenty of opportunities to carry out tasks and demonstrate competency, especially where he or she experiences some difficulty or when speed of execution needs improvement. • If performance does not improve with alternative adjustments and repetition of tasks, discuss the situation with your trainee as this may impact on the successful assessment and certification.
Facilitate independence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train your trainee on job-related social skills that are relevant to your workplace (e.g. how to ask for help when needed, how to explain a problem to a supervisor, how to follow an instruction, how to accept and respond to critical feedback, how to ask for clearer instructions, how to better manage time, etc.). People with disabilities may struggle with those specific skills due to lower exposure and work experience. • Include your trainee in casual discussions and work-related social events. • Once you have established a trusted relationship with your trainee, provide feedback about how he or she is perceived by the other workers and help him or her feel well in the workplace. • Allow the time for your trainee to think and answer questions independently.
Correct your trainee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular and consistent feedback, especially if your trainee faces difficulty evaluating his or her own progress. • Have the trainee repeat back the instructions. Reclarify as needed and correct any misunderstanding before he or she begins the task. • Check the trainee as he or she performs the task to ensure he or she is doing the work correctly. Correct any mistakes on the spot to facilitate understanding.

5. Reasonable Adjustment during Continuous Assessment:

Please note that a separate government circular, NVQ Circular 01/2020, already issued specifically addressing reasonable adjustments during NVQ assessments. This circular provides comprehensive guidelines and procedures to ensure fair and equitable assessment practices for persons with disabilities. Trainers are hereby required to familiarize themselves with the circular and strictly adhere to its provisions when conducting assessments for individuals with disabilities.

6. Work-Based Training for Persons with Disabilities

To ensure equal access to NVQ training courses for people with disabilities, it is important to consider work-based training as a means to provide more accessible and inclusive training opportunities. Work-based training offers a practical and inclusive approach, allowing individuals with disabilities to acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive work environment.

Trainers should actively explore work-based training options and collaborate with employers and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that individuals with disabilities have equal access to these opportunities.

The work-based training model promotes a “learning-by-doing” approach, allowing trainees with disabilities to acquire both technical and soft skills. This approach facilitates the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments (RA) for trainees with disabilities to participate safely and effectively and complete the course, making the training process more inclusive and beneficial for all parties involved.

7. Financial Commitment

Registered Training Providers and Employers are encouraged to proactively explore available funding opportunities to cover the costs associated with implementing reasonable adjustments during the training process. This will ensure that all trainees, regardless of their disability, have equal access to effective learning opportunities.

8. Training of Registered Training Providers on Reasonable Adjustments:

TVEC arranges to conduct training programs for trainers and assessors in collaboration with University of Vocational Technology (UoVT) and other organizations, with a particular emphasis on incorporating reasonable adjustments in training delivery and assessments. Additionally, the latest information on "Reasonable Adjustments" can be accessed through the following link on the TVEC website: www.tvec.gov.lk. This resource showcases innovative practices in this regard.

We kindly request your kind cooperation in accommodating individuals with disabilities in your training programs. This responsibility extends to all parties involved in the TVET sector. If you require further information or clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@tvec.gov.lk or the relevant division(s) of TVEC.

The circular is effective from 29th August 2023.



Dr. K. A. Lalithadheera

Director General