



Working together for a skilled tomorrow

## Learners with Special Needs and Registered Disabilities Policy and Guidelines

<b>Status:</b>	Approved
<b>Custodian:</b>	Learning Division Manager
<b>Decision Date:</b>	12 March 2014
<b>Decision Number:</b>	015/14
<b>Review Date:</b>	March 2015
<b>Version Number:</b>	LD/LPL003/vs2/2014
<b>Amendment Date:</b>	

## 1. Preamble

The Insurance Sector Education Training Authority (INSETA) has drafted a formal Learners with Special Needs and Disability Policy and Guideline to indicate the best practice requirements in dealing with learners with special needs and disabilities and to indicate the expectations required from the INSETA of training providers, employers and other stakeholders who engage with learners with special needs and disabilities especially, but not limited to, the Learnership process.

## 2. Definitions

**Special needs-** for purposes of this document, special needs are noted as barriers, problems, learning difficulties and negative influencers of learners in their ability to perform and meet the requirements of the learning. These could be language, attention based problems, summative anxiety to name a few. This document will mention some common special needs, but it is noted that there are various special needs affecting learners and not all of these can be addressed. What is important to note is the process which should be followed when dealing with learners with special needs rather than the specific special need itself.

**Disability-** for purposes of this document, disabilities are noted as per the reporting requirements of the South African Qualifications Authority in terms of the NLRD. Sight, Hearing, Communication, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Multiple, Disabled but unspecified, are currently the terms used to identify disabled learners. In addition, as per SARS definition, "A disabled person is... a person who has a long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment which substantially limits his or her prospects of entry into, or advancement in, employment (SARS, 2008, p.7).

**Learnership-** is the formal contracted delivery mechanism in which either employed or unemployed learners follow a formal structured learning process over the duration of one year in which they complete both theoretical learning through a facilitated event (generally for about 30% of the time) and the remainder in the workplace in an experiential learning component (generally for about 70% of the time). There is a requirement that the workplace is involved in the learning experience and that mentors, workplace evidence and evaluation of meeting workplace tasks are evaluated as part of the learning process.

**Education and Training Quality Assurance Body (ETQA)** - is the quality assurance body of the Sector Education Training Authority whose responsibilities include; the quality assurance of the design, delivery and assessment of learning and a judgement about the quality of the learner achievements which can result in endorsement and ultimately certification.

### **3. Policy Statement**

The need to identify and support learners with special needs is noted in the following SAQA statement:

*“In respect of ensuring a quality experience for all learners, learners’ special needs need to be considered in the design of course and learning support materials, assessment arrangements and communication with teachers, tutors, lecturers, educators or trainers. Learners with special needs also need to be taken into account in the design of the institution which should be relevant to the form of delivery of learning programmes” (SAQA, 2001, p.25).*

For this purpose, special needs are noted separately to those of disabilities, not for purposes of trying to create difference but rather because reporting is done against disabilities, including direct links to funding and meeting targets which are not governed within the definition of special needs alone.

The INSETA encourages the credible recruitment and selection of learners with special needs and disabilities and has come up with this policy and guideline to ensure that the learners are managed in a way that ensures dignity with a well-planned and implemented structure to ensure that the learners are supported and guided throughout the learning programme, so that they are able to meet the learning requirements and attainment of a registered skills programme or qualification on the National Qualifications Framework.

What is important to note is that this policy and guideline will not describe the various special needs and support mechanisms, but rather identify the process that should be adopted for dealing with learners with special needs and disabilities, and that those parties enrolling learners with special needs and disabilities conduct the correct research and engagement with appropriate professionals on how to specifically manage the special need and disability of the learners that are enrolled.

The cost of managing learners with special needs and disabilities is more than conventional delivery costs. The costs and resource requirements need to be considered in planning, as these increased costs need to be carefully budgeted for in terms of ensuring sustained financial resources and appropriate support for the duration of the learning programme. These increased costs are subsidized by both the INSETA's disabled learner increased funding allocation as well as the SARS tax allowance.

Should a Provider or workplace consider engaging with special needs and disabled learners, then a formal policy and guidelines document should be developed aligned to the guidelines component of this document to indicate how the Provider or Workplace is able to meet the various requirements. A special needs policy therefore needs to consider:

1. the design of the learning programme,
2. the learning support materials,
3. alternative format of PoE presentation
4. assessment arrangements and
5. communication with role players.

Furthermore, the institution (in this case the training provider and workplace) should:

1. be relevant to the delivery and support of learning for special needs and disabled learners,
2. have the appropriate resources and appropriately competent staff,
3. buildings that are conducive to the delivery of special needs and disabled learning, and
4. ensure that as an institution, they are sufficiently capacitated to be able to deliver learning to learners with special needs and disability.

The INSETA ETQA considers the quality assurance of achievements of learners with special needs and disabilities paramount in ensuring that fairness, validity, reliability and practicability are not compromised in the process.

## **4. Guideline**

### **Institutional readiness**

Prior to engagement with or consideration of enrolling learners, the Provider and Workplace need to ensure that they are able to accommodate the learners.

There are various special needs and disabilities and therefore consideration of how these learners will be integrated into the learning or workplace experience need to be deliberated and appropriate resources considered.

Please note that even within the same category of disability, the special need or and disability, for example sight, could range from partially sighted to near-sighted and the manner in which the learners need to be supported will therefore not be the same. Please consider how best to accommodate the learners in which maximum dignity is given to them and consideration for their individual requirements.

Evidence requirements: Institutional readiness can be confirmed through an Occupational Therapist report and supporting evidence in which the institution indicates the appropriate resources available for managing learners with special needs, competent staff as well as experience confirmed especially the occupational therapist who conducts the evaluations, evidence of how the buildings are conducive to the delivery of special needs and disabled learning, and ensuring that as an institution they are sufficiently capacitated to be able to deliver learning to learners with special needs and disability.

### **Qualified personnel**

The Provider and Workplace must demonstrate that they have the appropriate skilled staff to manage and advice on learners with special needs and disabilities.

Requirement: Should Provider's or Workplace consider accommodating special needs learners, please note that it is a requirement that the services of an occupational therapist is contracted to provide the necessary evaluations, and associated recommendations for accommodation or modification prior to commencement of the delivery of learning, and to advise on the support requirements of the learners as well as conduct sensitization workshops with role-players.

Requirement: Should facilitators and other support staff working with special needs and disabled learners not have any formal learning or experience, then it is assumed that the occupational therapist will work in an ongoing role throughout the duration of the learning intervention.

Evidence requirements: Evidence should be supplied of the personnel who manage special needs learners, including their previous learning which has equipped them in this area, as well as experience with special needs and disabled learners.

Recommendation: It is recommended that role-players who will engage with special needs and disabled learners consider completing the following unit standard:

SAQA ID: 10294 (level 5) 10 credits

Identify and respond to learners with special needs and barriers to learning

### **Needs analysis and formal evaluation of learners**

Evaluating the learner's special needs and conducting a needs analysis is critical in understanding how to assist the learner with support and guidance and possible modification to the delivery of the learning process.

Requirement: The occupational therapist in conjunction with the training provider and if appropriate, the workplace, will conduct a needs analysis and formal evaluation of learners with special needs and disabilities.

Evidence requirement: Records of the needs analysis and the reports on each of the learners needs to be available at any of the quality assurance activities, monitoring, verification or a visit to evaluate the special needs delivery of learning.

### **Selecting appropriate delivery methodology to meet the learner's special needs and disability**

The delivery methodology adopted will be informed by the needs analysis and the formal report from the occupational therapist. It would make recommendations and provide advice to the role-players of what the requirements are in order to meet the needs of the learners. In the management of special needs learners, there are generally two terms to consider:

- Accommodation of learning needs
- Modification of learning delivery

- **Accommodation**

There are a variety of special needs ranging from language barriers to dyslexia. These special needs, which do not require modification of the delivery of the learning, require managing learners through accommodation. The purpose of noting this is that there are multiple ways in which learners can be accommodated- from being allowed additional time in a controlled summative, to identifying support opportunities in terms of language and working with a translator. The key to accommodation is to identify what resources the learner requires in the delivery, assessment (formative, summative and workplace) as well as any support the learner may require in the workplace during the experiential learning component.

Evidence requirement- Evidence required during verification of special needs learners is supplied ranging from how the special needs were identified, the plan made to meet the needs, evidence of accommodation and evidence that the facilitator, mentor, assessor and moderator have been informed and have accommodated the learners special needs.

What is important to remember is that the assessment principles still need to be met and learners cannot be "led" to competence because of their special need; they should be supported throughout the learning process, so that they are able to demonstrate that they have been appropriately supported and that they have been able to meet the learning outcomes through their own effort.

- **Modification**

If it is noted that the learners special need or disability requires that the delivery of learning and the learning resources need to be modified in order to support the learner then this is known as modification of learning. For example, this could include learning material which is converted to braille for blind or partially blind learners, adapting the facilitation approach and extending the number of days to meet requirements of learners who have concentration based disabilities or considering assistive technology for learners with motor based disabilities,

If the occupational therapist has recommended that learners' special needs require

modification, the training provider should understand what the modification requirements are and how to best support the learners.

Evidence requirement: Modification of learning material usually requires that the delivery methodology is also adapted in order to meet the learner's needs. The modification requirements need to be formally noted by the occupational therapist indicating what resources are required, what needs to be modified, how learning delivery and assessment need to be managed and more importantly, how the learners will be supported and monitored through the learning experience.

Evidence requirement: Regular reporting is required and there should be communication and support offered to all role players engaging in the learning programme.

### **Sensitization workshops**

Sensitization workshops are the opportunity to help share with and sensitize the role-players who will interact with special needs and disabled learners on what the requirements are in order to best support and guide the learners; but also in general about special needs and disabilities so that role-players are provided with an opportunity to understand the area and ask questions in a safe and controlled environment.

Requirement: Sensitization workshops are required for all role players working with special needs learners in a specific group. The specific special needs of learners can be shared (as long as the learners have given their permission), or the special need can be shared without identifying the learner (if the learner does not wish to share their special need and disability), The modification of the delivery, how learners should be supported and guided during the learning experience and the reporting requirements to track and monitor the progress and support of the learners is a requirement.

Evidence requirement: Attendance registers and agendas for sensitization workshops can be supplied during quality assurance activities.



### **Multiple special needs in one group**

There is a cautionary requirement that those engaging with special needs and disabled learners do not confuse the "term" for a singular delivery concept. Although integration of able bodied and disabled learners is encouraged, the overall consideration of the learner is the guiding principle and in cases where learners require additional resources, the delivery should be weighed against the larger group to determine whether there is fairness of inclusion of the learner.

It is also important to note that grouping types of special needs and disabilities is discouraged. Learners with sight difficulties could range between short sighted, partial sighted and complete blindness and each learner's modification will be different.

### **Learner guidance and support**

Continued learner support and guidance is critical for learners with special needs and disabilities.

It is also important to indicate how the learners were credibly supported without "leading" them towards competence.

Requirement: Cases where modification has been used should also utilize the services of the occupational therapist throughout the process.

Evidence requirements: Evidence should be available for all of the meetings, sessions, resources used during the support and guidance phase.

### **Assessment (assessment principles)**

Please ensure that the assessment principles are considered at all times:

- Validity
- Fairness
- Reliability
- Practicability

And the assessment evidence principles:

- Validity
- Authenticity

- Currency
- Sufficiency

The idea is not to compromise the integrity of the qualification and unit standards through attempting to not uphold the assessment principles.

Moderation, the internal quality assurance process, should validate that the assessment principles have been upheld and therefore the special needs learners should be moderated as part of the sample requirements of the INSETA

Evidence requirement: A carefully planned assessment plan specific to the special needs learners should be designed with the occupational therapist and assessor and should be carefully monitored.

## **6. References**

South African Qualifications Authority. (2001). *Criteria and Guidelines for Providers*. SAQA, Pretoria.

South African Revenue Services (2008). *Guide on the tax incentive for Learnership agreements*. Legal and Policy Division: Johannesburg

**Addendum:**  
**Evaluation tool for considering the management accommodation/modification of special needs and disabled learners**

Why are we offering learning programmes for disabled people?

---

---

---

What are the special needs/ disabilities of the learners?

---

---

---

What do we currently do to support these learners?

---

---

---

Is the current support adequate? (survey opinion of current or past special needs learners)

---

---

---

## TO HELP US CONSIDER SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

<b>INPUT</b> Can the individual learn from the same kinds of instruction and materials as his or her peers?
<i>If not, how can the individual successfully acquire the information and skills to be learned?</i>
<b>OUTPUT</b> Can the individual participate in activities and be evaluated in the same ways as his or her peers?
<i>If not, how can the individual successfully participate and be assessed?</i>
<b>RATE</b> Can the individual work and make progress as fast as the rest of the learners or workers? Does the individual require the same amount of feedback and practice?
<i>If not, how can the schedule and practice opportunities be adapted?</i>
<b>SUPPORT</b> Can the individual manage independent assignments and teamwork as well as his or her peers?
<i>If not, what kinds of adjustments are needed?</i>

(Deschenes, Ebeling, & Sprague, 1994)

**Preparing to identify special need requirements specific to the learnerships**

Name of Learnership:

---

NQF Level:

---

Learning assumed to be in place:

---

---

---

1.

What prerequisite skills and background are necessary for this programme?

---

---

---

Which skills are critical for success?

---

---

---

In what areas will the learner need additional preparation or support?

---

---

---

2.

What specialised or adapted equipment and tools might be needed by the learner?

---

---

---

3.

What assistance will the learner need to obtain resources and complete assignments?

---

---

---

4.

In what format will the learner submit evidence of competence for assessment?

---

---

---

5.

How well can the learner stay on track and adapt to routines and changes?

---

---

---

6.

What accommodations have been successful in the past?

---

---

---

7.

Can the learner use the same kind of learning material as other learners?

---

---

8.

Will the instructional management system require adaptations to support the learner's need for structure and limits?

---

---

---

9. Will the learner with disabilities be able to participate in the activities and master the objectives of this facilitation event if I-

- change the way instruction is delivered?

---

---

- change the materials to be used?

---

---

- change the way the learner must respond?

---

---

- increase support in the learning environment?

---

---

- change the physical features of the room?

---

---

- change the behaviour management strategies?



- 
- 
- change the schedule or adjust time demands?
- 
- 

- change the assessment procedures?
- 
-

## Post facilitation and assessment questionnaire

- Did the learner actually use and take advantage of the accommodation/modification?

---

---

---

---

- Was the learner able to participate fully in the activity because of the accommodation/ modification?

---

---

---

---

- Was the learner able to master the objectives of the lesson or course outcomes because of the accommodation/modification?

---

---

---

---

- Did the accommodation/ modification help the learner to feel that he or she belongs in the class?

---

---

---