



Joint Council for Qualifications

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND CARERS

This information is taken from the JCQ guide to the special consideration process which lays down the criteria and eligibility for any application made to the awarding bodies

Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control **at the time of the examination**. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate's ability to take an examination or demonstrate their normal level of attainment in an examination.

Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. This means that there will be some situations where candidates should not be entered for an examination. This is because **only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded**. To make larger adjustments would jeopardize the standard of the examination.

All examinations measure what a candidate knows and can do. The overall grades awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination. Qualifications would not accurately reflect candidates' attainment if special consideration was given to reflect lost teaching and learning.

Special consideration cannot be applied for if the candidate was not able to develop their subject knowledge and understanding due to absence during the course, joining the course late or teaching and learning being disrupted by staff shortages, planned building work or lack of specialist facilities.

Where long term circumstances have prevented the candidate from reaching the competence standards, it may not be possible to make an adjustment.

Special consideration can only be awarded where a candidate has been fully prepared for the examination and covered the entire course, but their ability to demonstrate their subject knowledge and understanding is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control **at the time of the examination**.

These include:

- temporary illness or accident/injury **at the time of the examination**;
- bereavement **at the time of the examination** (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);
- domestic crisis arising **at the time of the examination**;
- serious disturbance **during an examination**, particularly where recorded material is being used;

- accidental events **at the time of the examination** such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper or CD, failure of practical equipment, failure of materials to arrive on time;
- participation in sporting events, training camps or other events **at an international level at the time of the examination**, e.g. representing their club or country at an international level in chess or football;
- failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.

Special consideration will not be submitted for trivial cases such as:-

- a bird tweeting outside the exam room
- a lorry reversing
- a toilet being flushed
- doors in a corridor adjacent to the exam room opening and closing
- very short momentary noise from aeroplanes, helicopters or lawn mowers

Candidates **will not** be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in the examination is affected by:

- long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the examination (i.e. difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated);
- bereavement occurring more than six months before the examination, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the examination or there are on-going implications such as an inquest or court case;
- domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays (including school/exchange visits and field trips) at the time of the examination;
- minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
- the consequences of committing a crime, where formally charged or found guilty; (However, a retrospective application for special consideration may be considered where the charge is later dropped or the candidate is found not guilty.)
- the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
- the consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations;
- the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason;
- quality of teaching, staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities
- misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;
- misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
- making personal arrangements such as a wedding or holiday arrangements which conflict with the examination timetable;
- submitting no coursework or non-examination assessment at all, unless coursework or non-examination assessment is scheduled for a restricted period of time, rather than during the course;

- missing all examinations and internally assessed components/units;
- failure to cover the course because of joining the class part way through;
- a disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) unless the disability or circumstances exacerbate what would otherwise be a minor issue at the time of the examination, i.e. difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated;
- failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline

For candidates who are present for the examination but disadvantaged - special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of additional marks to each component affected within a specification. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune.

The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the total raw marks available in the component concerned, including coursework/non-examination assessment.

A member of KGGs Senior Leadership Team must approve any application for special consideration and the centre must be satisfied that there has been a material detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment. Under the rules and regulations, students will be informed of any application for special consideration which is submitted by the Exams Manager to any awarding body on their behalf.

As a centre we must decide whether the candidate meets the published criteria for special consideration and these applications will only be processed where they are supported by the school. If the centre does not support an application for special consideration then it will not be submitted to the relevant awarding body as speculative applications cannot be accepted by the exam boards.

The decision made by the awarding body will be based on various factors which may vary from one subject to another. These may include:

- the severity of the circumstances;
- the date of the examination in relation to the circumstances; and
- the nature of the examination, e.g. whether written papers are affected as opposed to coursework/non-examination assessment, or whether a Practical Test or Speaking Test is involved.

Special Consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion i.e. where there has been a recent trauma and viral illness being suffered. Special consideration should only be applied for the most serious indisposition

Candidates or their parents/carers should, in the first instance, discuss an application for special consideration with either Head of Year or the Exams Manager

The following are examples of circumstances which **must apply at the time of the examination**.

5% This is the maximum allowance and will be reserved for the most exceptional cases, such as:

- terminal illness of the candidate;
- terminal illness of a parent/carer; brother or sister

- death of a member of the immediate family within three months of the examination;
- exceptional and disruptive crisis or incident at or near the time of the examination such as attempted murder against the candidate

4% Very serious problems such as:

- life-threatening illness of the candidate or member of immediate family;
 - major surgery at or near the time of the examination;
 - severe disease (e.g. cancer);
 - **very recent** death of member of extended family;
 - life-changing injury occurring at the time of the examination;
 - serious crisis/incident at the time of the examination such as severe assault or a serious accident.
- Admission to hospital for mental health condition or eating disorder

NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the examination taking place.

3% A more common category (more cases will fall into this category), including:-

- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative;
- recent illness of a more serious nature;
- flare-up of a severe congenital/medical condition such as Crohn's disease;
- Flare up of a psychological condition or a mental health condition;
- Deterioration of a candidate's disability;
- broken limbs;
- physical assault trauma before an examination;
- recent crisis/incident;
- witnessing a distressing event on the day of the examination.
- Approved access arrangement not provided to the candidate at the time of the examination;
- Cyber attack significantly affecting the completion of candidates' coursework/non-examination assessments

NB 'Recent' is defined as up to four months prior to the examination taking place.

2% The most common category of allowance (most cases will fall within this category):

- **illness at the time of the examination;**
 - Mild depression being treated
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- broken limb on the mend;
 - concussion;
 - effects of pregnancy (not pregnancy *per se*);
 - extreme distress on the day of an examination (not simply exam related stress);
 - 2% for the last examination taken in a day when the candidate has been entered for three or more examinations timetabled for the same day and the

total duration of those papers is more than 5 hours 30 mins for GCSE or more than 6 hours for A level

(Where extra time has been used following formal approval, this should be included in the calculation.)

(Supervised rest breaks must not be included in the total duration of the papers when applying for special consideration.)

1% Reserved for more minor problems:

- on-going noise during examination;
- illness of another candidate which leads to minor disruption in the examination room;
- stress or anxiety for which medical advice has been sought and/or medication has been prescribed;
- hay fever **on the day of an examination**;
- minor upset arising from administrative problems

The school is never informed of how much allowance has been made to a student's grade, only whether the special consideration application has been accepted (if the above criteria has been met and the student is deemed eligible) or if it is rejected

Where the request for special consideration fails to meet the criteria, it will be rejected by the awarding bodies

Exam boards reserve the right to ask for evidence in support any application made