

Policy Name:	Special Considerations Policy (Exams)
Policy Type:	Statutory
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Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Policy Owner:	Steph Brown

Glossary of abbreviations

JCQ	Joint Council of Qualifications
JCQ SC	Joint Council of Qualifications : Special Considerations Process
JCQ GR	Joint Council of Qualifications : General Regulations
JCQ ICE	Joint Council of Qualifications : Instructions for Conducting Exams

Summary of updates for 2025 - 26

Upon review, no centre-specific updates or changes were applicable to this document.

1. Aims

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to identify roles and responsibilities within the special consideration process and confirms the centre will submit an application for special consideration where a candidate meets the published criteria. (JCQ GR 5.9)

2. Legislation and Guidance

- 2.1. Special consideration can only be awarded where a candidate has been fully prepared for assessments 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 assessment(s).
- 2.2. A centre must decide whether the candidate meets the published criteria for special consideration. An awarding body cannot determine the candidate's eligibility and make the decision for the centre.
- 2.3. Applications must only be processed where they are supported by the centre and the candidate meets the published criteria for special consideration with evidence in place.
- 2.4. If the centre does not support an online application for special consideration, then it must not be submitted to the relevant awarding body or bodies.
- 2.5. Speculative applications for special consideration cannot be accepted.
- 2.6. Where a candidate does not meet the published criteria for special consideration, the awarding body will reject the application and provide clear reasons for doing so.
- 2.7. Centres must not submit applications for special consideration for trivial cases.

- 2.8. Special consideration can only go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their assessments. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. This means that there will be some situations where candidates should not be entered for a qualification or a unitised examination. This is because only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded. To make larger adjustments would jeopardize the standard of the qualification. (SC 1)

3. Eligibility for special consideration

- 3.1. Candidates will be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but performance in the examination, or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment, is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control (JCQ SC 2.1)
- 3.2. Special consideration must be applied for at the time of the assessment (JCQ SC 2)
- 3.3. Candidates will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in the exam is affected by the reasons detailed in the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process (JCQ SC 2.3)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The role of the head of centre

- 4.1.1. Be familiar with, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication A guide to the special consideration process
- 4.1.2. Ensure where a candidate meets the published criteria, an application for special consideration will be submitted to the relevant awarding body by the exams office/officer

4.2. The role of the exams office/officer

- 4.2.1. Refer to the criteria detailed in the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process to determine where a candidate is/is not eligible for special consideration
- 4.2.2. Where a candidate meets the published criteria, submit an application for special consideration to the relevant awarding body

- 4.3. The role of the senior leader is to sign appropriate evidence to support all eligible applications (JCQ SC 6) ensuring that if the centre does not support an application for special consideration, it will not be submitted to the relevant awarding body.

- 4.4. The role of other staff is to provide any appropriate evidence or information that may be required to determine candidate eligibility

- 4.5. The role of an affected candidate (or parent/carer) is to provide any medical or other evidence that may be required to confirm eligibility for special consideration

5. Applying for special consideration

- 5.1. At the centre, where a candidate is eligible, special consideration will be applied for at the time of assessment in accordance with regulations as detailed in the JCQ document A guide to the special consideration process.
- 5.2. For candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged 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.
- 5.3. Examples where a candidate/candidates may be eligible for special consideration include:
 - 5.3.1. Application for an allowance on the last paper taken in a day when a candidate has been entered for three or more examinations timetabled for the same day and the total duration of those papers is more than 6 hours (GCE and Level 3 exams) or more than 5 hours 30 minutes (GCSE, Level 1 and Level 2 exams) including any approved extra time but not any time taken for supervised rest breaks, special consideration for an allowance on the last paper taken will be applied for (JCQ SC 3.3)
 - 5.3.2. Serious disturbance during the examination (JCQ SC 2.1)
 - 5.3.3. A candidate arrives for the examination and is clearly unwell, extremely distressed and/or may have sustained an injury that requires emergency access arrangements to be put in place:
 - the candidate is kept under centre supervision (from 30 minutes after the published starting time for that examination until they begin it) while appropriate arrangements are put in place for the candidate to take the examination (ICE 6.9)
 - special consideration is applied if this indisposition has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on the candidate's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in the examination (JCQ SC 1)
- 5.4. If a candidate is absent for acceptable reasons, and the centre is prepared to support an application for special consideration, special consideration will be applied for if the examination missed is in the terminal series and the minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence can be met. (JCQ SC 4)
- 5.5. If a candidate is absent for unitised examinations taken in an examination series prior to certification, candidates must be re-entered for any missed units at the next assessment opportunity. Unless there are difficulties arising, e.g. group performances which cannot be repeated, special consideration will not be awarded. (JCQ SC 4) Other issues
- 5.6. Where a candidate may be eligible for special consideration (a post-assessment adjustment) in a vocational qualification, the centre will follow A guide to special consideration (7) and awarding body guidance to determine if, when and how an adjustment can be applied for.
- 5.7. Where other issues or problems affect a candidate or a group of candidates, special consideration will be explored in the document A guide to the special consideration process and applied for where eligible. This may include, for example:
 - 5.7.1. Other certification (JCQ SC 5)
 - 5.7.2. Coursework/non-examination assessment extensions (JCQ SC 5)
 - 5.7.3. Shortfall in work (coursework/non-examination assessment) (JCQ SC 5)
 - 5.7.4. Lost or damaged work (non-examination assessment components) (JCQ SC 5)
 - 5.7.5. Candidates taking an incorrect or defective question paper (JCQ SC 5)
 - 5.7.6. Candidates undertaking the wrong controlled assessment or non-examination assessment assignment (JCQ SC 5)

- 5.8. Candidates will not be eligible for special consideration if preparation for, or performance in the examination is affected by a minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour, a mobile phone ringing, or a momentary fire alarm (JCQ SC 2.3)
- 5.9. (In accordance with SC 1: A centre must not submit applications for special consideration for trivial cases. Examples of trivial cases which would not warrant special consideration include, but are not limited to: a bird tweeting outside the examination room; a lorry reversing; a toilet being flushed; doors in a corridor adjacent to the examination room opening and closing; very short, momentary noise from, for example, aeroplanes, helicopters, lawn mowers)

6. Processing applications for special consideration

- 6.1. The role of the head of centre is to ensure all eligible applications are supported by appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team (JCQ SC 6)
- 6.2. The role of the exams office/officer
- 6.2.1. Ensure applications are processed as required by the awarding bodies
 - 6.2.2. Ensure a candidate/candidates (or a parent/carers) understands that all cases must be dealt with by the centre (JCQ SC 6)
 - 6.2.3. Ensure that special consideration is applied for at the time of the assessment
 - 6.2.4. Ensure special consideration is not applied for in a cumulative fashion and where a candidate may be affected by different indispositions, ensure special consideration is only applied for the most serious indisposition
 - 6.2.5. Keep evidence to support all applications on file until after the publication of results and provide the appropriate evidence signed by a member of the senior leadership team to support an application where this may be requested by an awarding body (JCQ SC 6)
 - 6.2.6. Meet the awarding body deadline(s) for submitting applications

7. Submitting applications for special consideration

- 7.1. At the centre, where a candidate or group of candidates is/are eligible for special consideration, applications will be submitted to the relevant awarding body following the published processes in A guide to the special consideration process.
- 7.2. In cases of online applications for special consideration, the candidate/candidates will be informed when an application for special consideration is submitted to the awarding body (to ensure compliance with the UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018).
- 7.3. Evidence to support all applications will be retained on file until after the publication of results.
- 7.4. For Special Considerations applications relating to timetabled written examinations:
- 7.4.1. Applications for individual candidates will be submitted online by logging into the relevant awarding body secure extranet site and following the links to special consideration (where the awarding body's secure site accepts applications online)

7.4.2.A single application to cover all examinations affected where a candidate is present but disadvantaged and a separate application for each day on which examinations are missed where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason will be submitted

7.4.3.For cases involving groups of candidates, applications will be made online where the awarding body's secure system accepts group applications or form 10 will be completed

7.4.4.Form 14 Self certification form (Self certification for candidates who have missed an examination) will only be completed by a candidate/parent/carers where circumstances warrant this and will not be used where the centre knows the candidate was ill

7.5. For Special Considerations applications relating to Internally assessed work:

7.5.1.Where appropriate, applications will be made online where the awarding body's secure system accepts them or form 10 will be completed and submitted to the awarding body

7.5.2.Where an application relates to a shortfall in work for an individual candidate, this will be submitted online or by completing form 10, dependent on the awarding body

8. Applications post-publication of results

8.1. If, after the publication of results for a particular examination series, a claim is made that special consideration was not applied for at the time of an assessment where a candidate was eligible, the claimant will be informed that late applications will only be accepted by an awarding body in the most exceptional circumstances and where a senior leader is able to produce compelling evidence to support a late application.

8.2. If a claim is made after the completion of a review of results, the claimant will be informed that an application for special consideration cannot be submitted.