

## A summary guide to special consideration

<https://www.icq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-guide-to-the-spec-con-process-202021-Website-version.pdf>

Our Centre Policy states: To ensure consistency in the application of Special Consideration, we will ensure all teachers are familiar with the document: A guide to the special consideration process. This is a summary of the full document giving the highlights.

This guide governs the process in any given year, but, unlike in other year, applications for special consideration will not be made after exams have taken place, but these considerations need to be made when the grades are generated and the grades generated will need to demonstrate the outcome of these considerations. These considerations should be made and applied consistently across subjects.

### What is special consideration?

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade and is to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment. 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 assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

It can apply to a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in their examinations. Only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded.

The overall grade(s) awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination(s). The grades awarded do not necessarily reflect the candidate's true level of ability if attainment has been considerably affected over a long period of time.

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

### Which candidates are eligible for special consideration?

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. These include:

temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment;
bereavement at the time of the assessment (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);
domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment;
serious disturbance during an examination, particularly where recorded material is being used;
accidental events at the time of the assessment 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 assessment, e.g. representing their country at an international level in chess or football;
failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.
when candidates have been fully prepared for the specification but the wrong texts have been chosen.

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 manifest themselves at the time of the assessment;
bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment 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 assessment;
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 illness affects the candidate at the time of the assessment or where the disability exacerbates what would otherwise be a minor issue - (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.

### Candidates who are present for the assessment 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.

The decision should be based on various factors which may vary from one subject to another:

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

Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion. For example, because of a recent trauma at the time of the examination and the candidate suffering from a viral illness. Special consideration should only be applied for the most serious indisposition.

Candidates or their parents/carers should, in the first instance, discuss the application of special consideration with the school concerned. In our case, students will be invited to share with us what they consider to be cases worthy of special consideration and these will be recorded on the grading spreadsheet along with the percentage uplift to raw marks permissible in line with the following criteria.

<b>5% This is the maximum allowance and will be reserved for the most exceptional cases, such as:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• terminal illness of the candidate;</li> <li>• terminal illness of a parent/carer;</li> <li>• death of a member of the immediate family within two months of the examination;</li> <li>• very serious and disruptive crisis/incident at or near the time of the examination.</li> </ul>
<b>4% Very serious problems such as:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• life-threatening illness of candidate or member of immediate family;</li> <li>• major surgery at or near the time of the examination; severe disease;</li> <li>• very recent death of member of extended family; NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the examination(s) taking place.</li> <li>• severe or permanent bodily injury occurring at the time of the examination;</li> <li>• serious crisis/incident at the time of the examination.</li> </ul>
<b>3% A more common category (more cases will fall into this category), including:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative; recent illness of a more serious nature; NB 'Recent' is defined as up to four months prior to the examination(s) taking place.</li> <li>• flare-up of a severe congenital/medical condition or a psychological condition; broken limbs; organ disease;</li> <li>• physical assault trauma before an examination; recent crisis/incident;</li> <li>• witnessing a distressing event on the day of the examination involved.</li> </ul>

**2% The most common category of allowance - most cases will fall within this category:**

- illness at the time of the examination;
- 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);

**1% Reserved for more minor problems:**

- noise during examination which is more than momentary;
- illness of another candidate which leads to disruption in the examination room;
- stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed;
- hay fever on the day of an examination;
- minor upset arising from administrative problems.

**Candidates who are absent from a timetabled component/unit for acceptable reasons**

Centre staff must follow their internal procedures for dealing with candidates who feel unwell on the day of an examination.

The advised approach should be followed as set out in the summary document: *Worked examples to assist teachers in making grading decisions for GCSEs, AS and A Levels in summer 2021* available in full here: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Summer-2021-JCQ-Guidance-WorkedExamples.pdf>

**Lost or damaged work (non-examination assessment components)**

5.4 Please refer to the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments>