

## EXAMINATIONS & ASSESSMENTS POLICY - Special Consideration

### What is special consideration?

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 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 their normal level of attainment in an assessment.

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 jeopardise the standard of the examination. (Section 1 - relevant sections of JCQ's **A guide to the special consideration process** are referred to by the relevant number in this policy.)

### Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to identify roles and responsibilities in the special consideration process and confirm that STCG colleges will submit any applications for special consideration where candidates meet the published criteria.

### Eligibility for special consideration

#### Roles and responsibilities

##### Head of Centre/Senior Management

- Are familiar with the contents of, and refer/direct relevant centre staff to, the annually updated JCQ special consideration guidance document
- Ensure that, where relevant and in eligible situations, applications for special consideration are submitted to awarding bodies by Exams

##### Head of Exams

- Understands the criteria to determine when candidates are/are not eligible for special consideration
- Ensures that, where relevant and in eligible situations, applications for special consideration are submitted to awarding bodies within correct timescales

##### Teaching staff

- Provide to Exams without delay any appropriate evidence or information that may be required to determine a candidate's eligibility for special consideration

Policy Title: Exams & Assessments Policy	Staff Members Responsible: Heads of Exams Vice Principal QDLS
Version: September 2023	Review Date: September 2024

## Candidates (or parents/carers)

- Provide any medical or other evidence that may be required to determine eligibility for special consideration within given timescales
- Are informed that all cases must be dealt with by STCG colleges

Where eligible, special consideration will be applied for at the time of the assessment where candidates ... 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. (Section 2)

For candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged, Heads of Exams 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. (Section 3)

Examples of situations when special consideration may be applied:

1. If a candidate arrives for an exam and is clearly unwell, extremely distressed and/or has sustained an injury that requires emergency access arrangements to be put in place:
  - the candidate will be kept comfortable and under centre supervision from the required time while appropriate arrangements are put in place for the candidate to take the exam in the best conditions that can be provided
  - a judgement will be made on how the candidate's situation or disposition affected performance in the exam
  - where appropriate and where eligible, special consideration will be applied for
2. If candidates are affected by a major disturbance in the exam room (e.g. emergency evacuation), special consideration will be applied for on behalf of all candidates. Where a candidate is affected a minor disturbance in the exam room caused by another candidate (momentary bad behaviour, mobile phone ringing etc.), special consideration is not applied for.
3. Where a candidate takes multiple exams (three or more exams) timetabled for the same day and the total duration for those papers is more than 6 hours (GCE/Level 3 exams) or more than 5 1/2 hours (GCSE/Level 1/Level 2 exams) including any approved extra time (but not time taken for supervised rest breaks), special consideration for an allowance on the last paper taken is applied for.

If a candidate is absent from a timetabled component/unit for acceptable reasons, and STCG can support this, special consideration will be applied for if the exam missed is in the terminal series and the minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence can be met. 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. Special consideration will not be awarded in such circumstances unless there are difficulties such as group performances which cannot be repeated. (Section 4)

Where other issues or problems affect a candidate or a group of candidates, special consideration will be explored (Section 5) and applied for where eligible. This might include:

- other certification
- coursework/non-examination assessment extensions

Policy Title: Exams & Assessments Policy	Staff Members Responsible: Heads of Exams Vice Principal QDLS
Version: September 2023	Review Date: September 2024

- shortfall in work (coursework/non-examination assessment)
- lost or damaged work (non-examination assessment components)
- candidates taking an incorrect or defective question paper
- candidates taking the wrong controlled assessment or non-examination assessment assignment

Where a candidate may be eligible for special consideration (a post assessment adjustment) in a vocational qualification, the centre will follow Section 7 and awarding body guidance to determine if, when and how an adjustment can be applied for.

## **Processing applications for special consideration**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Head of Exams**

- Ensures evidence in support of eligible applications is appropriate
- Ensures evidence in support of eligible applications is signed by a member of the senior leadership team whenever possible, if not by the Head of Exams

#### **Exams officer**

- Understands that special consideration must be applied for at the time of the assessment
- Understands that special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion and that, where a candidate may be affected by different indispositions, an application for special consideration should only be made for the most serious indisposition
- Ensures applications will be processed as required by the awarding bodies
- Keeps evidence to support all applications on file until after the publication of results and provides the signed evidence to support an application where this may be requested by an awarding body
- Meets the required deadline(s) for submitting applications
- Inform candidates when an online application has been made, as well as the outcome in due course

## **Applying for special consideration**

### **Submitting applications for special consideration**

Where a candidate or group of candidates is/are eligible for special consideration, applications will be submitted to the relevant awarding body following JCQ's published processes.

When an online application is made the candidate/candidates are informed when it is submitted, which ensures compliance with the UK GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018.

Evidence to support all applications will be kept on file until after the publication of results.

### **Timetabled written exams**

- For GCSE/GCE qualifications, applications for individual candidates are submitted via relevant awarding body secure extranet sites
- The processes for submitting a single application to cover all exams where a candidate is present but disadvantaged and a separate application for each day where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason are followed

Policy Title: Exams & Assessments Policy	Staff Members Responsible: Heads of Exams Vice Principal QDLS
Version: September 2023	Review Date: September 2024

- For other qualifications, applications will be submitted online where the awarding body's secure system accepts these
- A Form 10 will only be completed and submitted to the awarding body where a paper application is specifically required by the awarding body
- For groups of candidates, applications will be made online where the awarding body's secure system accepts group applications, otherwise Form 10 will be completed
- A Form 14 (self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination) will only be completed by a candidate where circumstances warrant this and will not be used where the centre knows the candidate was ill

### **Internally assessed work**

- 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
- Where a short extension to a deadline is being requested, the awarding body will be contacted directly
- Where an application relates to a shortfall in work, this will be submitted online or by completing Form 10, dependent on the awarding body

### **Post assessment adjustments – vocational qualifications**

- Where relevant and eligible, Form 10 or form VQ/SC Application for special consideration Vocational qualifications will be completed and submitted to the awarding body

### **Late applications**

If, after the publication of results for a particular exam 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 compelling evidence to support a late application can be verified.

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.

### **Appeals regarding decisions relating to Special Consideration**

This may include decisions not to make/apply for special consideration in circumstances where a student does not meet the criteria for, or there is no evidence/insufficient evidence, to support the application of special consideration.

Where a decision is made in relation to special consideration for a student:

- If a student who is the subject of the relevant decision (or the student's parent/carer) disagrees with the decision made and reasonably believes that STCG has not complied with its responsibilities or followed due procedures, a written request setting out the grounds for appeal should be submitted to the Vice Principal. This should be done within 10 working days of the decision being made
- The Vice Principal will instruct the appropriate Head of School to investigate, and written feedback should be provided within 5 working days of receiving the appeal

To determine the outcome of the appeal, the Vice Principal will consult the JCQ's "Guide to the special consideration process" to confirm that STCG has complied with the principles and regulations governing special consideration and followed due procedures.

Policy Title: Exams & Assessments Policy	Staff Members Responsible: Heads of Exams Vice Principal QDLS
Version: September 2023	Review Date: September 2024

The appellant will be informed of the outcome of the appeal no later than 5 working days after submission of the appeal in writing.

If the appeal is upheld, STCG will proceed to implement the necessary arrangements/submit the necessary application without delay in order to meet awarding body deadlines.

Where a learner is dissatisfied with the way in which the appeal has been dealt with, they may complain in writing to their College Principal who will review the investigation and provide a written response to the complainant within 20 working days. The response will provide a written explanation and information on how the Group will deal with the matter if the appeal is upheld.

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