

Chapter 2

Which candidates will be eligible for special consideration?

Special consideration must be applied for at the time of the assessment.

- 2.1 **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.** These include:
- 2.1.1 temporary illness or accident/injury **at the time of the assessment**;
 - 2.1.2 bereavement **at the time of the assessment** (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);
 - 2.1.3 domestic crisis arising **at the time of the assessment**;
 - 2.1.4 serious disturbance **during an examination**, particularly where recorded material is being used;
 - 2.1.5 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;
 - 2.1.6 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;
 - 2.1.7 failure by the centre to implement **previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series**.
- 2.2 When candidates have been fully prepared for the specification but the wrong texts have been chosen, special consideration may be given at the discretion of the awarding body.

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that the correct texts are taught. Where this has not happened there can be no guarantee that a candidate will receive special consideration. Such instances will be investigated by the awarding body on a case-by-case basis.

Where the wrong texts have been taught, it is essential that the texts studied must have been examined in the current specification in a previous examination series.

- 2.3 **Candidates will NOT be eligible for special consideration** if preparation for, or performance in the examination is affected by:
- 2.3.1 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**;
 - 2.3.2 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;
 - 2.3.3 domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays (**including school/exchange visits and field trips**) at the time of the assessment;
 - 2.3.4 minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
 - 2.3.5 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.)
 - 2.3.6 the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
 - 2.3.7 the consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations;
 - 2.3.8 the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason;
 - 2.3.9 **quality of teaching**, staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities;
 - 2.3.10 misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;
 - 2.3.11 misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
 - 2.3.12 making personal arrangements such as a wedding or holiday arrangements which conflict with the examination timetable;
 - 2.3.13 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;
 - 2.3.14 missing all examinations and internally assessed components/units;
 - 2.3.15 failure to cover the course because of joining the class part way through;
 - 2.3.16 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**);
 - 2.3.17 failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.

Chapter 3

Candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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 assessment, e.g. whether written papers are affected as opposed to coursework/non-examination assessment, or whether a Practical Test or a Speaking Test is involved.
- 3.3 **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 or college concerned.

Private candidates must liaise with the school or college which made entries on their behalf about an application for special consideration.

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

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;
- death of a member of the immediate family **within two months** of the examination;
- very serious and disruptive crisis/incident **at or near the time of the examination.**

4% Very serious problems such as:

- life-threatening illness of candidate or member of immediate family;
- major surgery **at or near the time of the examination**;
- severe disease;
- very recent death of member of extended family;
- severe or permanent bodily injury occurring **at the time of the examination**;
- serious crisis/incident **at the time of the examination.**

NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the examination(s) 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 or a psychological condition;
- broken limbs;
- organ disease;
- physical assault trauma before an examination;
- recent crisis/incident;
- witnessing a distressing event **on the day** of the examination involved.

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

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)**;
- allowance on **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 5 hours 30 minutes (GCSE examinations) or more than 6 hours (GCE examinations)**.

(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:

- 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.

Where the request for special consideration fails to meet the criteria it will be rejected.