JCQ CIC Joint Council for Qualifications CIC

A guide to the special consideration process

Effective from 1 September 2025

For the attention of heads of centre, senior leaders within schools and colleges and examination officers

This document covers the following qualifications:

AQA Applied General qualifications
AQA Level 2 Certificate in Further Maths
AQA Level 3 Certificate in Mathematical Studies
BTEC Firsts, BTEC Nationals and BTEC Tech Awards
Cambridge Advanced Nationals
Cambridge Nationals
Cambridge Technicals
City & Guilds Level 2 and Level 3 Technical qualifications
FSMQ
GCE AS and A-level
GCSE
NCFE Level 1/Level 2 Technical Awards
NCFE Level 3 Applied General and Vocational qualifications
OCR Level 3 Certificates
T-Levels (Technical qualifications)
TQUK Design, Engineer and Construct! qualifications
WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 General qualifications
WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational qualifications
WJEC Level 1 and Level 2 Vocational Awards (Technical Awards)
WJEC Level 3 Applied Certificates, Diplomas and Extended Diplomas (including Alternative Academic Qualifications)

PRODUCED ON BEHALF OF:

AQA Questions matter | OCR Oxford Cambridge and RSA | Pearson | City & Guilds | NCFE | WJEC CBAC | CCEA Rewarding Learning

GO

Tip: Click "GO" to begin navigating this document.

©2025

How to use this document

Tabs

On every double page spread you will find tabs on the left-hand side. These will indicate which chapter of the document you are currently on, as well as enabling you to navigate between the chapters at a click.

This home icon will also allow you to jump back to the contents, in case you need a quick reminder of what each chapter is about.

Clickable links

This document is full of helpful hyperlinks to allow you to find related content more easily. Any time you see a paragraph or chapter number directly referenced, you will be able to click on it to navigate to the page in question and find the information.

Website URLs directing to external information will also be hyperlinked, allowing you to access this information at a click.

Helpful reminders of clickable functions will be indicated throughout by this “mouse click” icon. External web links will open in a new tab in your default browser.

Chapter summaries

Each chapter is supported by a helpful chapter summary, offering a bitesize breakdown of what is covered within each chapter. Points are supported by icons, which are then used again throughout the text to help you identify the key topics of the paragraphs.

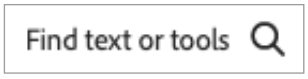
Chapters are colour-coded for reference.

Zooming in

If the text is too small, you may zoom in on the content by pressing “Ctrl” and “+” together on your keyboard (or “CMD” and “+” if you are a Mac user) or by clicking on the “+” or “-” Zoom buttons in your PDF viewer (e.g. your browser). These buttons are often situated at the top of the PDF viewer and may look something like this:

Searching

To search for a specific word or phrase within the document, press “Ctrl” and “f” together on your keyboard (or “CMD” and “f” if you are a Mac user) or by clicking on the search button in your PDF viewer. These buttons are often situated at the top of the PDF viewer and may look something like this:



Enter the word[s] into the text bar that appears and navigate through the options in the document.

General

Changes made to the content of this document since the previous version (1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025) are **highlighted in yellow** for easy identification.

Contents

Tip: Use the "Next Page" and "Last Page" Buttons to go forward or back a page.

Page 4
Contact details

Page 5
Chapter 1
Special consideration

Page 7
Chapter 2
Which candidates will be eligible for special consideration?

Page 10
Chapter 3
Candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged

Page 13
Chapter 4
Candidates who are absent from a timetabled component or unit for acceptable reasons

Page 17
Chapter 5
Other issues

Page 20
Chapter 6
Processing applications for special consideration

Page 24
Chapter 7
Post-assessment adjustments – special consideration (other vocational qualifications)

Contact details

AQA
Questions matter

0800 197 7162

aqa.org.uk

City & Guilds

cityandguilds.com

TQUK

03333 583 344

tquk.org

CCEA
Rewarding Learning

02890 261 200

ccea.org.uk

NCFE

0191 239 8000

ncfe.org.uk

OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

01223 553 998

ocr.org.uk

Pearson

0344 463 2535

qualifications.pearson.com

WJEC CBAC

02920 265 000

wjec.co.uk

All queries regarding special consideration **must** be raised with the relevant awarding body and **not** the JCQ. The JCQ cannot address queries regarding special consideration.

Changes made to the content of this document since the previous version (1 September 2024 to 31 August 2025) are highlighted in yellow for easy identification.

Tip: click on to jump to the contents page.

Special consideration

This chapter summarises:

- **what defines special consideration;**
- **the purpose of special consideration;**
- **a summary of when special consideration should and should not be applied;**
- **the limitations of special consideration; and**
- **signposts to further detail in the following chapters.**

Special consideration can only be awarded where a candidate:

- has been fully prepared for assessments
- has covered the entire course
- cannot fully demonstrate their subject knowledge and understanding due to circumstances beyond their control at the time of the assessment(s).

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
- teaching and learning being disrupted for any reason.

Click on a paragraph number (e.g. 2.1) to jump to that section.

Special consideration

1.1 Centres **must** only submit applications for special consideration where an adverse 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. For example, a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury or some other event outside of their control **at the time of the assessment**.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 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. Speculative applications for special consideration **cannot** be accepted.

1.5 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.

1.6 Centres **must not** submit applications for special consideration for trivial cases. The circumstances which warrant special consideration are set out in paragraphs 2.1 and 3.3.

1.7 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 or lawnmowers.

1.8 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 jeopardise the standard of the qualification.

There are minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence (see chapter 4, paragraph 4.5).

1.9 All assessments measure what a candidate knows and can do. 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)**.

1.10 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.

1.11 The overall grade(s) awarded must reflect the candidate's level of attainment demonstrated in the assessment(s). Qualifications would not accurately reflect candidates' attainment if special consideration was given to reflect lost teaching and learning.

Chapter 2 Summary

Which candidates will be eligible for special consideration?

This chapter outlines the criteria for candidates to be eligible for special consideration.

In summary:

Criteria where candidates are eligible include:

- temporary illness at the time of assessment;
- a recent bereavement in the immediate family;
- domestic crisis at the time of assessment;
- a serious disturbance during the examination;
- accidental events during the examination;
- international sporting commitments on the day of the assessment; and
- approved access arrangements not in place.

Criteria that are **not eligible** for special consideration include:

- long-term illness;
- a bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, unless it is an anniversary or there are ongoing implications;
- domestic inconvenience;
- minor disturbance in the examination by another candidate;
- the consequences of committing a crime, 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;
- quality of teaching, staff shortages, planned building work or lack of facilities;
- misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend the examination at the right time and in the right place;
- misreading the instructions on the question paper;
- conflicting personal arrangements, such as a wedding or holiday, on the day of the examination;
- not submitting any coursework or non-examination assessment at all;
- missing all examinations and internally-assessed components or units;
- failure to cover the course because of joining the class partway through;
- a disability or learning difficulties; and
- failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.

Tip: click on a chapter tab to jump to that chapter.

Further information on these parameters can be found in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3.

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 the production of coursework or non-examination assessment, is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control. These include:

2.1.1 Temporary illness, accident or 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**.

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 or 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 club or country at an international level in chess or football on the day of an examination.

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.

2.2.1 **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.

2.2.2 Where the wrong texts have been taught, 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(s)/assessment(s) is affected by:

2.3.1 Long-term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time, unless the illness or circumstances worsen what would otherwise be a minor issue **at the time of the assessment** (i.e. difficulties over and above those that previously approved access arrangements would have alleviated).

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 ongoing implications, such as an inquest or court case or exceptional individual candidate circumstances.

2.3.3 Domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays (including school or 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, a mobile phone ringing or a momentary fire alarm.

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 any reason.

2.3.9 Quality of teaching, loss of teaching, staff shortages, planned 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, which conflict with the examination timetable.

2.3.13 Not submitting any coursework or non-examination assessment, unless the 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 or units.

2.3.15 Failure to cover the course because of joining the class partway through.

2.3.16 Any disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed), unless the disability or circumstances worsen what would otherwise be a minor issue **at the time of the assessment**, i.e. 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 Summary

Candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged

This chapter covers special consideration for candidates who are present for the assessment but have been disadvantaged.

Key points:

The centre must be satisfied that there has been a material and detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of additional marks to each component affected within a specification.

The size of the percentage depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune.

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

Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion.

Candidates or their parents or carers must discuss the application for 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.

Click here for more on the details of 5%, 4%, 3%, 2% and 1% criteria.

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

Chapter 3

Candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged

3.1 Special consideration will normally be given by applying a percentage to each component affected within a specification. The percentage depends on the timing, nature and extent of the qualifying criteria. The maximum percentage given will be 5% of the total raw marks available in the component concerned, including coursework and non-examination assessment.

The centre **must** be satisfied that there has been a material and detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

3.2 The percentage 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 or 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.

3.3.1 Candidates or their parents or carers must discuss the application of special consideration with the school or college concerned.

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

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

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

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

NB 'Very recent' is defined as within one month of the examination(s) taking place. The centre **must** be satisfied that there has been a material and detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

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

- **recent** traumatic experience, such as the death of a close friend or distant relative;
- **recent** illness or injury of a more serious nature;
- flare-up of a long term medical condition, for example 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 or incident;
- witnessing a distressing event **on the day** of the examination;
- approved access arrangement(s) not provided to the candidate at the time of the examination;
- cyber attack significantly affecting the completion of a candidate's coursework or non-examination assessments.

NB 'Recent' is defined as up to four months prior to the examination(s) taking place. The centre **must** be satisfied that there has been a material and detrimental effect on candidate examination performance or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment.

2% This is the most common category (most cases will fall within this category), including:

- illness **at the time of the examination**;
- mild depression being treated;
- broken limb on the mend;
- concussion;
- effects of pregnancy (**not** pregnancy *per se*);
- extreme distress **on the day of the examination** (**not** just exam-related stress);
- 2% for the last examination 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 Level 1 and Level 2 examinations) or **more than** 6 hours (GCE and Level 3 examinations).

  (Where extra time has been used following formal approval, this should be included in the total duration of the examinations when applying for special consideration.)

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

1% Reserved for more minor problems:

- on-going noise during an examination;
- illness of another candidate leading 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, such as the wrong question paper initially being issued.

Where the request for special consideration fails to meet the criteria, it will be rejected with a clear reason for doing so.

Chapter 4 Summary

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

This chapter summarises candidates who are absent from a timetabled component or unit for acceptable reasons.

Key points:

Adjustments can be made when a candidate has missed a timetabled component and the centre supports an application for special consideration.

For unitised GCSE, GCE AS and A-level qualifications, the unit must have been missed in the final examination series and the minimum requirements for enhanced grading must be met. The requirements for enhanced grading will vary according to the qualification. You can read more on this in 4.5.

Awarding bodies cannot give advice as to whether a candidate is fit to take an examination.

Centre staff must follow their internal procedures if candidates feel unwell on the day of an examination.

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.

In rare and exceptional circumstances where the centre cannot identify additional reasonable adjustments which would allow a candidate with a disability to sit their examinations, the relevant awarding body must be contacted.

Chapter 4

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

4.1 When a candidate has missed a timetabled component or unit for acceptable reasons and the centre is prepared to support an application for special consideration, an adjustment may be made to the grade.

4.2 For unitised qualifications, the unit **must** have been missed in the terminal series and the minimum requirements of paragraph 4.5 (below) **must** be met.

4.3 Awarding bodies cannot give advice as to whether a candidate is fit to take an examination. Centre staff **must** follow their internal procedures for dealing with candidates who feel unwell on the day of an examination.

4.4 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.

This principle also applies where entire cohorts miss units for any reason, such as adverse weather conditions, or where individual candidates miss units because of a change of centre.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCED GRADING IN CASES OF ACCEPTABLE ABSENCE

4.5 The minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence are detailed below. In all cases, candidates **must** have been fully prepared and covered the whole course.

GCE AS and A-level qualifications (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC specifications):

One whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed.

Please note that partially completed AS or A2 units are **not** acceptable.

- **AS linear specifications:** one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed.
- **AS unitised specifications:** one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed.
- Enhancement given at AS level (unitised specifications) will be carried forward to A-level.
- **A-level linear specifications:** one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed.
- **A-level six-unit award (unitised specifications):** one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed with **at least one** A2 unit completed.
- **A-level four-unit award (unitised specifications):** one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, **must** have been completed with **at least one** A2 unit completed.
- **An A-level award (unitised specifications)** will **not** be issued based on AS unit results alone.

GCSE (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC specifications):

One whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment, must have been completed.

For CCEA GCE AS and A-level qualifications and GCSE qualifications:

25% of the total assessment must have been completed.

The minimum requirements for the November 2025, March 2026 and June 2026 examination series are detailed below.

- For **CCEA GCE AS qualifications,** 25% of the total AS qualification **must** have been completed.
- For **CCEA GCE A-level qualifications,** 25% of the total A-level qualification **must** have been completed, with at least one A2 unit completed.
- For **CCEA GCSE qualifications,** 25% of the GCSE qualification **must** have been completed.

These arrangements only apply to candidates certificating in the series where the examination has been missed. Those candidates not certificating in the series where the examination has been missed **must** take the examination in the next available series.

Please note that partially completed GCSE, GCE AS or A2 units **are not** acceptable.

Retrospective applications for special consideration for enhanced grading **cannot** be made based on these criteria.

BTEC Firsts, BTEC Nationals: 25% of the total qualification must have been completed.

BTEC Tech Award: one whole component must have been completed.

City & Guilds Level 2 and 3 Technical qualifications: the synoptic assignment(s) **must** be completed.

NCFE (numerical marked examinations): 25% of the total qualification **must** have been completed.

OCR Cambridge National, Cambridge Advanced Nationals and Cambridge Technical qualifications: one whole unit **must** have been completed. This can either be a timetabled examination or a moderated unit. Enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence is only possible in the certification series.

Projects (including Extended Project): where the project is not completed, a grade **cannot** be issued.

T Level Technical qualifications: one whole sub-component, which can either be an examination or an employer-set project, **must** have been completed.

NCFE T Level Technical qualifications and City & Guilds T Level Technical qualification in Animal Care and Management: 25% of the Occupational Specialism **must** have been completed. Enhanced grading cannot be applied to practical assignments.

TQUK (numerical marked examinations): 25% of the total qualification **must** have been completed.

4.6 In **rare and exceptional circumstances** where the centre cannot identify additional reasonable adjustments which would allow a candidate with a disability to sit their examinations, the relevant awarding body or bodies **must** be contacted.

4.7 The awarding body will determine each case on an individual basis, understanding the candidate's individual circumstances and, wherever possible, putting in place appropriate adjustments which will allow examinations to be sat. An awarding body may be able to determine grades for a disabled candidate using suitable alternative assessment evidence.

4.8 Centres should refer to pages 20–21 of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments* for more detailed information:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/

Other issues

This chapter covers circumstances where a candidate may require special consideration that has not been specifically addressed in previous chapters.

This includes:

where there have been exceptional mitigating circumstances beyond a candidate's control;

where a candidate has died or is terminally ill;

a shortfall in work completed;

lost or damaged work; and

candidates issued with an incorrect or incomplete question paper, set the wrong coursework or non-examination assessment task or taught the wrong set text.

Chapter 5

Other issues

OTHER CERTIFICATION

5.1 Where a candidate has been fully prepared and entered for a qualification but has encountered exceptional mitigating circumstances beyond their control and is unable to sit any awarding body set examinations or assessments, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body. The awarding body will advise the centre of the process and the information required. For example, an awarding body may issue a statement of recognition.

5.2 A statement of recognition records the candidate's likely qualification grade(s), according to the centre, had the awarding body's set examinations or assessments been completed. The statement of recognition is designed to support the candidate's progression to the next stage of education, training or employment. It can inform discussions to facilitate progression with further education or higher education institutions, other education providers or employers. The statement of recognition is provided by the awarding body based on the information supplied by the centre and is **not** a qualification certificate.

5.3 Where a candidate has died or is terminally ill, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body, which may issue an honorary certificate or posthumous award.

SHORTFALL IN WORK (COURSEWORK OR NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT)

5.4 If a candidate has been subject to an unforeseen prolonged illness or other misfortune during the period when the work was being produced – the criteria for which are outlined in chapters 2 and 3 – it may, in some subjects, be possible to accept a reduced quantity of work. However, **all of the assessment objectives must have been covered at least once**. This will not be possible if the specification only requires one piece.

5.5 Where several pieces of work are required, the reduction will only be accepted if those pieces are testing the same criteria. It will not be possible to give this consideration in every case. For example, if work has not been submitted, the assessment objectives have not been satisfied or the candidate joined the course late.

NO ADJUSTMENT TO THE MARKS MUST BE MADE BY THE CENTRE

5.6 Form 10 – JCQ/SC[1] should be submitted to the awarding body, attached to a breakdown of marks across the assessment objectives.

5.7 Candidates **must** have been fully prepared for the course but unable to finish the work. Awarding bodies will not normally agree to a reduced amount of work in advance.

LOST OR DAMAGED WORK (NON-EXAMINATION ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS)

5.8 Please refer to the JCQ document *Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments*:
https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments

[1] AQA, CCEA and OCR centres **must not** submit Form 10 – JCQ/SC. Applications **must** be submitted online using AQA Centre Services, CCEA SpC Online or OCR Interchange, as appropriate.

OTHER PROBLEMS

5.9 There are circumstances which are accidental and may require specialist input. For example, an incorrect question paper was handed to the candidate or a question paper was defective in some way, such as an incorrectly printed page.

5.10 These cases are given special consideration by means other than those detailed so far. They may need to be referred to a subject officer or a senior examiner for a subject-specific decision as to how special consideration should be awarded. This means that the results may not immediately show the enhancement. Marks may have been adjusted to reflect the issue that occurred.

5.11 An application for special consideration should be submitted to the relevant awarding body when a candidate has taken an incorrect paper, the incorrect paper has been replaced by the correct paper or the candidate has completed both. There are circumstances where it is not possible for an awarding body to grant special consideration to candidates who have attempted an incorrect paper.

5.12 Where candidates have taken the wrong coursework or non-examination assessment assignment, the centre may apply for special consideration if it is not possible to enter candidates at the next assessment opportunity. There are circumstances where it is not possible for an awarding body to grant special consideration to candidates who have attempted the incorrect coursework or non-examination assessment component.

Where a candidate has been:

- issued with an incorrect question paper;
- set the wrong coursework or non-examination assessment task; or
- taught the wrong set text;

an awarding body may investigate this as maladministration.

Chapter 6 Summary

Processing applications for special consideration

This chapter contains information on how to apply for special consideration.

Here are some top tips:

DO

Submit special consideration applications online.
Make online applications for timetabled written examinations.
Inform a candidate when an application for special consideration is submitted to the awarding body.
Ensure your submission complies with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.
Where a candidate is present but disadvantaged for a timetabled written examination, only submit a single online application for all affected components.
Where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason, submit a separate online application for each missed examination.
Support your applications with appropriate evidence which is authorised by a member of the senior leadership team.
Retain evidence until after the publication of results.

DO NOT

Submit paper forms.
Submit spreadsheets.
Miss the deadlines for applications.

See example scenarios on page 22.

Chapter 6

Processing applications for special consideration

ONLINE APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

6.1 Before processing online applications, the centre **must** be satisfied that the candidates' circumstances warrant special consideration, as set out within this document, and that applications are sufficiently evidenced.

6.2 Special consideration applications for AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR, Pearson, TQUK and WJEC qualifications **must** be processed online. The centre **must** inform a candidate when an application for special consideration is submitted to the awarding body. The centre **must** ensure that it complies with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

6.3 Online applications **must** be made for timetabled written examinations. Paper forms **will not** be accepted. Spreadsheets **must not** be submitted to awarding bodies.

6.4 Online applications for special consideration are made through AQA Centre Services, CCEA SpC Online, Edexcel Online, NCFE secure website, OCR Interchange, TQUK Verve management system and WJEC Portal.

6.5 In most cases the online system will provide an instant decision.

6.6 For AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE, OCR and TQUK, centres **must** also make online applications where there are problems with internally-assessed components or units, such as coursework and non-examination assessments, and in cases involving groups of candidates. Paper forms **will not** be accepted by AQA, CCEA, City & Guilds, NCFE , OCR and TQUK.

6.7 Where a candidate is present but disadvantaged for a timetabled written examination, a single online application can be made for all affected components once the examinations are over or once the candidate has recovered – whichever occurs first. It is not necessary to make separate applications for individual examinations.

6.8 All applications **must** be supported by the centre with appropriate evidence authorised by a member of the senior leadership team. **The centre must retain this evidence until after the publication of the results.** Where a candidate is present but disadvantaged for a timetabled written examination, a proportion of cases will be sampled by an awarding body for quality assurance purposes. A centre may be asked by an awarding body to provide supporting evidence.

6.9 Where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason, a separate online application **must** be processed for each missed examination.

6.10 All applications **must** be supported bythe centre with appropriate evidence authorised by a member of the senior leadership team. Where the centre is aware of an ongoing medical condition which may cause sudden absence, or the candidate was known to be unwell in the run-up to the examination or the candidate turned up for the examination unwell and was sent home, then a statement can be produced to support an online application for special consideration. There is no need for formal medical evidence. **The centre must retain this evidence until after the publication of the results.** Where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason, a proportion of cases will be sampled by an awarding body for quality assurance purposes. A centre may be asked by an awarding body to provide supporting evidence.

6.11 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.

6.12 Speculative applications for special consideration **cannot** be accepted.

6.13 **Awarding bodies reserve the right to call in evidence.**

APPLICATIONS MADE AFTER PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

6.14 **After the publication of results, late applications will only be accepted in the most exceptional circumstances and must be submitted before the deadline for reviews of results for the respective examination series.**

6.15 A member of the senior leadership team **must** produce compelling evidence to support a late application.

The awarding bodies have a published appeals process in respect of decisions on special consideration. This process is set out in the JCQ document *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes:* https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals

EXAMPLES OF WHEN SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IS AND IS NOT APPROPRIATE

Example 1

A Year 12 candidate is sitting GCE AS qualifications in June 2026. The candidate is unable to attend any of his AS examinations (Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics) due to a temporary injury. The centre will re-enter him for GCE AS Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics at the next available assessment opportunity in June 2027.

Example 2

A candidate misses two GCSE examinations in one day due to ill health: French in the morning and Computer Science in the afternoon. She meets the minimum requirements for a GCSE award in June 2026, having completed over 15% of the total assessment in both GCSE subjects*. The centre applies for special consideration. As the centre knows that the candidate has been struggling with her health over the past few days, they can write a supporting letter to substantiate her absence from the two GCSE examinations.

Example 3

A candidate sits a GCE A-level Government and Politics examination on Thursday morning. He is known to be struggling with a chest and ear infection yet is adamant that he must sit his examination. The candidate's illness is clear to the invigilation team. The centre submits an online application for special consideration, as the candidate was present for his Government and Politics examination but was disadvantaged. However, the candidate is unable to attend his GCE A-level German examination the following morning. He meets the minimum requirements for a GCE A-level German award since he has already completed one examination which is worth more than 15% of the total assessment. The centre can write a statement supporting the application for special consideration since they know he was falling ill prior to his absence from Friday morning's examination.

Example 4

A candidate sits a GCSE Italian examination on Thursday afternoon. There were no known problems during Thursday's examination. However, she does not attend her GCSE Geography examination on Friday morning. Her mother contacts the school office on the morning of the Geography examination to report her absence owing to a stomach upset. Medical evidence is not available to substantiate the request. The centre advises the parent to complete the relevant part of Form 14 – JCQ/ME which is then brought into the school office. The centre, having received Form 14, feels able to support the application and submits an online application for special consideration. Form 14 is retained on the centre's files.

Example 5

A candidate sits a GCE A-level Economics examination on Monday morning. He is undergoing treatment for a serious illness. The candidate has recently been prescribed medication which is causing serious side effects. The candidate sits his GCE A-level Economics examination as scheduled but is unable to sit his remaining GCE A-level Media Studies and A-level Physical Education examinations. He can satisfy the rules for special consideration. He has already completed one A-level Physical Education non-examination assessment (NEA) component which is 15% of the total assessment and one A-level Media Studies paper which is worth more than 15% of the total assessment. The candidate visits his GP who, on account of her knowledge of her patient and his condition, is more than willing to produce a note for the school. Similarly, his school is willing to write a supporting statement.

Example 6

A centre enters a candidate for a Level 2 Technical qualification. The candidate has an approved application for 25% extra time. When the candidate takes an online examination, it is discovered that 25% extra time has not been added to the duration of the examination. The centre had failed to add the 25% extra time allowance when booking the examination. As the candidate had an approved application for 25% extra time, an application for special consideration is submitted to the awarding body.

Example 7

A candidate is in their first year of a T Level Technical qualification. The candidate is absent for all papers for the Core exam due to illness but completes the employer-set project. As the candidate is only in the first year of a two-year course and it is not their final series, special consideration **cannot** be applied for.

Example 8

A candidate is in their first year of a two-year BTEC National course. The candidate is absent from a timetabled examination due to illness and has not completed any internally-assessed units. As the candidate is not due to certificate until next year, and there will be further opportunities for the candidate to re-sit the examination, the application for special consideration is rejected.

Example 9

A candidate is in their second year of a two-year BTEC First course. The candidate is absent due to ill health for one paper in the January series. The centre has confirmed that the candidate will be unable to re-sit the examination in the June series due to their mitigating circumstances. As the candidate will be certificating in the June series, an aegrotat is deferred and will be calculated in the certificating series.

*For CCEA GCSE specifications, 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed. See chapter 4 for more information.

Chapter 7 Summary

Post-assessment adjustments – special consideration (other vocational qualifications)

This chapter covers special consideration for vocational qualifications.

An awarding body's decision to award special consideration in vocational qualifications will be based on factors which may include:

- **the severity of the circumstances;**
- **the date of the assessment; or**
- **the nature of the assessment.**

However, it may not be possible to apply special consideration where:

- **an assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence;**
- **the assessment criteria must be fully met; or**
- **units or qualifications confer a 'Licence to Practise'.**

Where an assessment has been missed or is in the form of an on-demand test, the centre should offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

For vocational qualifications similar in nature to general qualifications, awarding bodies may implement the minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence, as outlined in chapter 4.

Advice must always be sought from the relevant awarding body.

Applications for special consideration must be made on a case-by-case basis and be submitted to the relevant awarding body, in accordance with the awarding body's published requirements.

Chapter 7

Post-assessment adjustments – special consideration (other vocational qualifications)

This chapter covers other types of vocational qualifications which may be on-demand, credit based, require the demonstration of a practical competence or confer a 'Licence to Practise'.

7.1 THE AWARDING OF SPECIAL CONSIDERATION – VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

7.1.1 An awarding body's decision to award special consideration in vocational qualifications will be based on various factors, which may vary from learner to learner and from one assessment to another. These factors may include the severity of the circumstances, the date of the assessment and the nature of the assessment.

7.1.2 It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where:

- an assessment requires the demonstration of practical competence;
- the assessment criteria must be fully met;
- units or qualifications confer a 'Licence to Practise'.

7.1.3 Where an assessment has been missed or is in the form of an on-demand test, such as an electronic test set and marked by a computer, the centre should offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

7.1.4 For vocational qualifications similar in nature to general qualifications, awarding bodies may, in certain circumstances, implement the minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence, as outlined in chapter 4.

7.1.5 Advice **must** always be sought from the relevant awarding body.

7.2 APPLYING FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

7.2.1 Applications for special consideration **must** be made on a case-by-case basis. Separate applications **must** be made for each learner. The only exception to this is when a group of learners have been affected by a similar circumstance during an assessment, such as a defective question paper. A list of learners affected **must** be attached to the application.

7.2.2 Applications for special consideration **must** be submitted to the relevant awarding body in accordance with the awarding body's published requirements.

7.2.3 To ensure applications can be processed effectively, centres **must** also submit evidence to support the application. For example, a statement from a member of the centre staff or any other appropriate information.

The head of the centre, principal or CEO **must** authorise all applications for special consideration.

7.2.4 An awarding body will only liaise with the centre and not with the learner.

Special consideration will not be considered once learner achievement has been claimed and certificated.

7.3 LOST OR DAMAGED WORK (INTERNALLY-ASSESSED WORK)

7.3.1 When work has been lost or damaged due to events outside of the learner's control, an awarding body may consider an application for special consideration. In all cases, the centre **must** be able to verify that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress.

7.3.2 For competence-based qualifications, the centre is required to maintain assessment records independently of the learner's portfolio. If a portfolio is lost, the centre's records – along with fully documented question and answer sessions or written statements, where appropriate – may be used to confirm the learner's competence. If a portfolio is recreated because evidence has been lost, it should be internally verified.

7.3.3 The centre **must** follow the awarding body's published procedures for lost or damaged work.

7.4 OTHER CERTIFICATION

7.4.1 Where a candidate has been fully prepared and entered for a qualification but has encountered exceptional mitigating circumstances beyond their control and is unable to sit any awarding body set examinations or assessments, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body. The awarding body will advise the centre of the process and the information required. An awarding body may issue a statement of recognition[2].

7.4.2 Where a candidate has died or is terminally ill, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body, which may issue an honorary certificate or posthumous award.

[2] For further information on a statement of recognition, see chapter 5.