



Special Consideration

What is special consideration?

Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate's control at the time of the assessment, which 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.

Special consideration can only seek to go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in examinations. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. There will be situations where candidates should not be entered for an examination. Only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardize the standard of the examination.

All examinations are measuring what a candidate knows and can do. The overall grades 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 will be eligible for special consideration?

Special consideration must be applied for following a specific examination series.

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 controlled assessment, 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 competitions at an international level at the time of the assessment, e.g. representing their country at an international level in football or hockey;



- failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.

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;
- 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 controlled assessment/coursework/non-examination assessment at all, unless controlled assessment/coursework/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 as a consequence 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.



What is the special consideration allowance?

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of 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 controlled assessment/coursework/non-examination assessment.

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 controlled assessment/coursework/non-examination assessment, or whether a Practical Test or a Speaking Test is involved.

Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion, e.g. on the basis of a domestic crisis at the time of the examination and the candidate suffering from a viral illness.

Candidates or their parents/carers should, in the first instance, discuss the application of special consideration with the school or college concerned.

The following circumstances 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.

N.B. '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.

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

2% The most common category of allowance - the majority of 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.



How do I let the school know that the candidate may require an application for special consideration?

Please contact Mr Hirst (exams manager) by email jhirst@notredame-high.co.uk or by telephone 01142302536 ext 263 at the time of the assessment.

Mr Hirst will ask for information regarding your request for application for special consideration. He may ask, if required, for additional information/ evidence. This may include a doctor's note.

If the case meets the requirements for special consideration then Mr Hirst will complete the documentation required by the exam boards and he will submit the application.

Please be aware that as a school we will not know whether special consideration has been granted, or by how much, until results day.