



Joint Council for
Qualifications^{CIC}

A guide to the special consideration process General and Vocational qualifications

With effect from 1 September 2021

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

This document has been updated, 8 April 2022, to take account of the UK Health Security Agency's *Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19*:

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which was published on 1 April 2022.

The document has been further updated, 4 May 2022, by the JCQ awarding bodies operating in Wales who have published supplementary guidance on the application of the special consideration process in the context of the June 2022 examination series and the Welsh Government's guidance:

Self-isolation: guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts which was updated on 3 May 2022.

Produced on behalf of:



Centres are encouraged to access the interactive version of this booklet using the Centre Admin Portal (CAP). CAP is accessible via any of the awarding bodies' secure extranet sites.

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Website: cityandguilds.com

WJEC/CBAC

Tel: 02920 265 000

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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 2020 to 31 August 2021) are highlighted for easy identification.

1 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 his or her 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 jeopardize the standard of the examination.

There are minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence (see Chapter 4, section 4.3).

All examinations measure what a candidate knows and can do. 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.

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, 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 exacerbate 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 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 the disability or circumstances exacerbate 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.

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. **The centre 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.**

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 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.

The centre 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.

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.

The centre **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.

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 the 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.

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

- 4.1 When a candidate has missed a timetabled component/unit for acceptable reasons and the centre is prepared to support an application for special consideration, an adjustment may be made to the terminal grade. However, the component/unit **must** have been missed in the terminal series and the minimum requirements of section 4.3 **must** be met.

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.

- 4.2 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 due to adverse weather conditions or for any other reason, or where individual candidates miss units because of a change of centre.

Minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence

- 4.3 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):

at least 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed[†].

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

- AS linear specifications: 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed.
- AS unitised specifications: 25% 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: 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed.
- A-level six unit award (unitised specifications): 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed with **at least one** A2 unit completed.
- A-level four unit award (unitised specifications): 25% 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 units alone.

GCSE (AQA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC specifications): 25% of the total assessment **must** have been completed.

For CCEA GCSE, GCE AS and A-level specifications the revised minimum requirements for the March 2022 and June 2022 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 A2 assessments, on which the A level qualification is awarded, must have been completed.
- For CCEA GCSE qualifications, 25% of the **reduced** GCSE qualification must have been completed.

As in previous series, this will not apply to those candidates who miss an examination in the March 2022 series or June 2022 series and are not completing the qualification in that series.

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

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

In rare and exceptional circumstances an awarding body may award a grade on a lower percentage. In such cases the centre **must** contact the relevant awarding body. An award **cannot** be made where none of the components/units within a specification have been completed.

5 Other issues

Other certification

- 5.1 Where a candidate has been entered for a specification and has subsequently died or is terminally ill and unable to sit examinations/assessments, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body. The awarding body will advise the centre of the process and the information required.

Centres should note that where an awarding body issues an honorary certificate/posthumous award or a letter of recognition this is not a qualification award and will not have any academic value.

Coursework/non-examination assessment extensions

- 5.2 Where an individual candidate meets the published criteria for special consideration, i.e. a temporary illness, temporary injury or other indisposition, **prior** to the submission of their work, it may be possible to allow a short extension to the deadline.

An extension of no more than ten days to the deadline for the submission of work may enable the candidate to complete his/her work. The centre **must** contact the relevant awarding body to request this arrangement.

Shortfall in work (coursework/non-examination assessment)

- 5.3 If a candidate has been subject to an unforeseen prolonged illness or other misfortune during the period when the work was being produced, it may, in some subjects, be possible to accept a reduced quantity of work without penalty. 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.

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

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

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

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>

Other problems

- 5.5 There are circumstances which are accidental and specialist input may be required. 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.

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. An adjustment of marks may have been made to take into account the problem which arose.

- 5.6** Centres may not realise that a candidate has been given an incorrect question paper. Awarding bodies will notify centres of any discrepancies. If the centre is aware of the error at the time of the examination the candidate should, where possible, be given the correct question paper if he/she is still under centre supervision and is able to continue with the examination.

An application for special consideration should be submitted to the relevant awarding body when the incorrect paper has been taken, the incorrect paper has been replaced by the correct paper or the candidate has taken 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.

- 5.7** 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.

6 Processing applications for special consideration (GCSE and GCE qualifications)

Online applications for special consideration

- Applications for special consideration in respect of AQA, CCEA, OCR, Pearson and WJEC GCSE and GCE qualifications **must** be processed online.
- Online applications **must** be made for timetabled written examinations. Paper forms will **not** be accepted. Spreadsheets **must not** be submitted to awarding bodies.
- Online applications for special consideration are made through e-AQA, CCEA SpC Online, Edexcel Online, OCR Interchange and WJEC Secure Website.
- In most cases the online system will provide an instant decision.
- For AQA, CCEA and OCR, centres **must** also make online applications where there are problems with internally assessed components/units such as coursework and non-examination assessments, and in cases involving groups of candidates. Paper forms will **not** be accepted by AQA, CCEA and OCR.
- 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.
- All applications **must** be supported by signed evidence produced by a member of the senior leadership team. **The centre must retain this evidence until after the publication of 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 signed evidence.
- Where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason it is necessary to make a separate application for each day on which examinations are missed.
- All applications **must** be supported by signed evidence produced by a member of the senior leadership team. **The centre must retain this evidence until after the publication of 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 signed evidence.

Awarding bodies reserve the right to call in evidence.

Paper applications

6.1 Form 10 – JCQ/SC **must** be submitted where a paper application is specifically required by the awarding body. One form must be submitted by the head of centre/examinations officer per candidate, per subject. Appropriate and up to date evidence **must** support the application for special consideration. Form 10 – JCQ/SC **must** be signed; an electronic signature is acceptable. Applications will **not** be accepted if submitted directly by parents or candidates.

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

6.2 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.

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

An application for special consideration **cannot** be submitted after the completion of a review of results.

6.3 A member of the senior leadership team may attach a letter of explanation to the form where the circumstances are unusual, or the form is inadequate for the situation which has arisen. In some cases, it is appropriate to submit one form with a covering letter and attach to it a list of candidates affected.

6.4 It is not possible for all letters to receive an individual reply. It is more important to process the applications before the issue of results. Awarding bodies may be unable to respond personally to each individual application.

All cases **must** be dealt with by the centre.

The awarding bodies have a published appeals process in respect of decisions on special consideration. This process is set out in the JCQ publication *A guide to the awarding bodies' appeals processes*:

jcq.org.uk/exams-office/appeals

Some examples of when special consideration is and is not appropriate

Example 1

A Year 12 candidate is sitting GCE AS qualifications in June 2022. The candidate is unable to attend any of his AS examinations (Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics) due to ill health. The centre will re-enter him again for GCE AS Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics at the next available assessment opportunity – June 2023.

Example 2

A candidate misses two GCSE papers in one day, French in the morning and Computer Science in the afternoon, due to ill health. She meets the minimum requirements for a GCSE award in June 2022, having completed over 25% 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, there is no need for them to ask the candidate to produce a letter from her GP. The centre can write a supporting letter to substantiate her absence from the two GCSE papers.

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. 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 sat one paper. 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 Russian examination on Thursday afternoon. There were no known problems during Thursday's examination. However, she does not attend for 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 since he has completed a minimum of 25% of the specification in both GCE A-level Media Studies and GCE A-level Physical Education.

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.

*For CCEA GCSE specifications, 40% of the total assessment must have been completed.

7 Post assessment adjustments – special consideration (Vocational qualifications)

7.1 The awarding of special consideration – vocational qualifications

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.

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

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

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.

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

7.2 Applying for special consideration in vocational qualifications

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 where a group of learners have been affected by a similar circumstance during an assessment, such as a fire alarm. A list of learners affected **must** be attached to the application.

Applications for special consideration **must** be submitted to the relevant awarding body using Form 10 – JCQ/SC or Form VQ/SC.

Form 10 – JCQ/SC or Form VQ/SC are available electronically at:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>

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

The head of centre/Principal/CEO **must** authorise all applications for special consideration.

During the special consideration application process, an awarding body will only liaise with the centre on behalf of 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)

When a learner's work has been lost or damaged, 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.

For competence-based qualifications, the centre is required to maintain assessment records independently of the learner's portfolio. In the case of a lost portfolio, these records, together with fully documented question and answer sessions or written statements, as appropriate, can be used to confirm a learner's competence. If a portfolio is re-created, because evidence has been lost, it should be internally verified.

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

7.4 Other certification

An honorary certificate/posthumous award should be requested where a learner is terminally ill or deceased.

Advice **must** be sought from the relevant awarding body who will inform the centre of the process.

Centres should note that where an awarding body issues an honorary certificate/posthumous award or a letter of recognition this is not a qualification award and will not have any academic value.

Appendix 1 Supplementary guidance on the special consideration process for centres in England June 2022 examination series*

Published 8 April 2022

*This supplementary guidance does not apply to centres in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

For other jurisdictions, the equivalent UK Health Security Agency's guidance should be followed.

A range of measures have been put in place this summer to support candidates taking GCE AS, A-level and GCSE examinations. These measures include:

- advance information on the focus of examinations for most subjects to help candidates revise;
- provision of support materials for some examinations (formulae and equation sheets);
- changes to non-examination assessment and fieldwork requirements in some subjects;
- optional content in some GCSE specifications;
- generous grading in comparison to the June 2019 examination series, providing a safety net for candidates;
- a minimum of ten days between the first and last examination in each GCE AS, A-level and GCSE specification. This will reduce the chance of a candidate missing all examinations in a subject because of illness.

The JCQ awarding bodies providing other general and vocational qualifications have also put a range of measures in place to support candidates taking examinations and assessments this summer. These measures will have been published by the relevant awarding bodies.

Supplementary guidance for the June 2022 examination series

The JCQ awarding bodies operating in England are publishing this supplementary guidance on the application of the special consideration process in the context of the June 2022 examination series and the UK Health Security Agency's *Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19*:

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which was published on 1 April 2022.

This supplementary guidance should be read in conjunction with the other sections of the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process* which sets out the procedures where a candidate has been fully prepared and 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. Centres should also refer to the sections on the application of special consideration tariffs and the processing of applications.

The two categories of special consideration being:

- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is present for the examination/non-examination assessment but disadvantaged; (**see section 3, page 6** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process)
- or**
- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is absent from the examination/non-examination assessment for an acceptable reason (**see section 4, page 8** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process). This supplementary guidance focuses on absence only.

Key extracts from the UKHSA Guidance as of 1 April 2022

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

It is important that centres read and consider all appropriate UKHSA and other public health guidance. These extracts are included for convenience only.

For children and young people 18 and under:

- “Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.”
- “Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.”
- “It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.”
- “If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can.”
- “Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.”
- For further information on high temperature (fever) in children, please see the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/>

Key extracts from the UKHSA Guidance as of 1 April 2022

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

It is important that centres read and consider all appropriate UKHSA and other public health guidance. These extracts are included for convenience only.

For adults 19 and over:

- “If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell.”
- For further details on the symptoms of COVID-19 please see the NHS website:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms in adults - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-symptoms-in-adults/)

- “If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after the day you took your test. If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms. You can pass on the infection to others, even if you have no symptoms.”

As is normal in a standard examination series, candidates are expected to complete examinations to receive a grade. Centre staff **should** wherever possible encourage candidates to attend for their examinations. There may be exceptional cases though where this will not be possible, e.g. a temporary illness on the day of the examination.

Centres and candidates should adhere to the UKHSA guidance as it applies on the day of the candidate's examination(s). The JCQ awarding bodies will update this supplementary guidance as soon as possible should the relevant public health guidance change. Centres should also consider any differences in the guidance based on the candidate's age (e.g. 18 and under or 19 and over) and ensure they refer to the right guidance.

Special consideration when a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason

Candidates **must** be reminded that the awarding of a grade through the special consideration process can only be made where they are absent from an examination or non-examination assessment component for an acceptable reason.

A candidate who is staying at home and avoiding contact with others, in line with UKHSA guidance, at the time of the examination, is considered to be absent from the examination for an acceptable reason. This includes candidates who are displaying the symptoms described in the UKHSA guidance as advising them to stay at home (e.g. a high temperature for those aged 18 and under) as well as those with a positive COVID-19 test result.

Where a candidate still wishes to attend an examination, despite having symptoms (e.g. a high temperature) or a positive COVID-19 test the centre should encourage the candidate to follow the UKHSA's guidance.

The centre could also consider the advice in UKHSA's updated health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

Evidencing candidates' eligibility for special consideration

The JCQ awarding bodies will be adapting Form 14 -JCQ/ME - *Self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination* to assist centres in dealing with candidates who are absent from an examination for an acceptable reason in line with the UKHSA guidance. Centres will expect parents/carers/guardians and candidates to complete the relevant sections of the form.

Centres can verify the candidate's circumstances, where provided in Form 14, to process an application for special consideration using the category 'absent candidate'.

There is **no requirement** for a candidate to complete a COVID-19 test to provide evidence of their absence from an examination.

Minimum requirements for a candidate to receive a grade through the special consideration process

Section 4.3, page 8 of this document outlines the minimum requirements for an adjustment to be made to the grade where a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason.

However, for the June 2022 examination series, due to the exceptional circumstances, the awarding bodies **will award a grade where eligible candidates have completed the assessment(s) for at least one whole component within the specification.**

N.B A candidate **cannot** receive a grade for A-level Biology, Chemistry, Geology or Physics by only completing the Practical Skills Endorsement.

Similarly, a candidate **cannot** receive a grade for GCSE English Language by only completing the Spoken Language Endorsement.

As in all previous standard examination series, a qualification award **will not** be made where none of the examinations/assessments within a specification have been completed.

Additional information

Where a centre suspects the authenticity of the details provided by a candidate within Form 14, they should investigate the matter as suspected candidate malpractice using the standard **JCQ policy and procedure**.

Candidates should be made aware that their results can be withdrawn, or they can be disqualified if they provide false information on eligibility for special consideration.

Examples of possible scenarios:

Example 1

An A-level candidate who is 18 is unwell and has a high temperature on the day of one of their A-level examinations.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations until he no longer has a high temperature and is well enough to attend his examinations.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their illness using Form 14.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) As the candidate's examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days he will be able to receive A-level grades based on the other components completed.

Example 2

An A-level candidate who is 19 is displaying symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and has a high temperature or does not feel well enough to attend their examination.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations, until he no longer has a high temperature (if he had one) or no longer feels unwell.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their reason for absence using Form 14.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) As the candidate's A-level examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days in every subject, he will be able to receive A-level grades based on the other components completed.

Example 3

A candidate who is 16 has taken a COVID-19 test under the direction of a health professional or has chosen to take a COVID-19 test (against UKHSA guidance recommendations) and has a positive test result.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations for 3 days after the day she took the test.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their reason for absence using Form 14.
- c) The centre does not require the candidate to provide proof of a test but could keep a record of the test, such as a photograph, as evidence if it is available.
- d) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed GCSE examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- e) As the candidate's GCSE examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days in every subject, she will be able to receive GCSE grades based on the other components completed.

Example 4

An A-level candidate who is 17 has a positive COVID-19 test result or is unwell and experiencing a high temperature but wishes to attend their examination.

- a) The centre refers the candidate to the UKHSA guidance. **In the case of a positive test result**, the candidate is advised to stay at home and not attend their A-level examinations for 3 days after the day the test was taken. **In the case of symptoms**, the candidate is advised to stay at home until she no longer has a high temperature.
- b) The centre reassures the candidate about their eligibility for special consideration. As the candidate's examinations are spaced by at least 10 days in every A-level subject, grades can be awarded on the other completed components.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) If the candidate still requests to attend the examination, the centre should follow the advice in UKHSA's updated health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

Awarding bodies' contact details

For any queries on the special consideration process, the awarding bodies' contact details are:

AQA

Tel: 0800 197 7162

Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Eduqas

Tel: **02920 265 000**

Website: www.wjec.co.uk

OCR

Tel: **01223 553 998**

Website: www.ocr.org.uk

Pearson

Tel: **0344 463 2535**

Website: <http://qualifications.pearson.com>

Appendix 2 Supplementary guidance on the special consideration process for centres in Wales June 2022 examination series*

Published 4 May 2022

*This supplementary guidance does not apply to centres in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

For other jurisdictions, the equivalent government and/or government agency guidance should be followed.

A range of measures has been put in place this summer to support candidates taking GCE AS, A-level and GCSE examinations. These measures include:

- adaptations to NEA units and/or examined units for every WJEC GCSE and GCE qualification which:
 - streamline the content that will be subject to assessment in 2022
 - reduce NEA requirements
 - introduce optionality to assessments either via a choice of units or a choice of questions within a unit
- relaxing the controls under which many NEA units can be conducted
- providing advance information on the focus of examinations to help candidates revise for subjects where streamlining of content subject to assessment was not possible
- generous grading in comparison to the June 2019 examination series
- a minimum of ten days between the first and last examination in each GCE AS, A-level and GCSE specification. This will reduce the chance of a candidate missing all examinations in a subject because of illness.

The JCQ awarding bodies providing other general and vocational qualifications have also put a range of measures in place to support candidates taking examinations and assessments this summer. These measures will have been published by the relevant awarding bodies.

Supplementary guidance for the June 2022 examination series

The JCQ awarding bodies operating in Wales are publishing this supplementary guidance on the application of the special consideration process in the context of the June 2022 examination series and the Welsh Government's guidance: *Self-isolation: guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts*:

Self-isolation: guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contact

which was updated on 3 May 2022.

This supplementary guidance should be read in conjunction with the other sections of the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process* which sets out the procedures where a candidate has been fully prepared and 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. Centres should also refer to the sections on the application of special consideration tariffs and the processing of applications.

The two categories of special consideration being:

- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is present for the examination/non-examination assessment but disadvantaged; (**see section 3, page 6** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process)
- or
- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is absent from the examination/non-examination assessment for an acceptable reason (**see section 4, page 8** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process). This supplementary guidance focuses on absence only.

Key extracts from the Welsh Government's Guidance as of 3 May 2022

Self-isolation: guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts

It is important that centres read and consider all appropriate Welsh Government guidance and other public health guidance. These extracts are included for convenience only.

What you should do if you have symptoms of COVID-19

If you have any of the **main symptoms** of COVID-19, you should self-isolate and take a lateral flow test (LFT):

Lateral flow test (LFT)

You can order LFTs online or call 119 between 7am and 11pm (calls are free)

Continue to self-isolate until you get your LFT test result.

The **main symptoms** of COVID-19 are:

- a high temperature
- a continuous cough
- loss or change of taste or smell.

If you have a negative LFT test

You can leave self-isolation immediately.

People sitting GCSE, AS, A Level and vocational examinations

We want to enable learners to take their exams, well and safely.

- If you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19, you should self-isolate and take a lateral flow test (LFT).
- If the test is positive, you should self-isolate for at least 3 full days. Day 1 is the day after your symptoms started. Please **report your result**.
- On day 3, if your symptoms have stopped, take a LFT. If that test is negative, take another LFT on day 4.
- If your day 4 test is also negative, and you feel well and do not have a high temperature, you can leave self-isolation to sit your exam. Please **report your results**.
- If either the test on day 3 or the test on day 4 is positive, you should remain in self-isolation and contact your school or education setting.
- If you still have a high temperature or feel unwell, you should continue to self-isolate until it returns to normal, or you feel better.
- You should continue taking daily LFTs until you get 2 negative tests in a row, taken a day apart, or until day 10 – whichever is sooner. You do not need a negative LFT test on day 10 to leave self-isolation.

As is normal in a standard examination series, candidates are expected to complete examinations to receive a grade. Centre staff **should** wherever possible encourage candidates to attend for their examinations. There may be exceptional cases though where this will not be possible, e.g. a temporary illness on the day of the examination.

Centres and candidates should adhere to the Welsh Government guidance as it applies on the day of the candidate's examination(s). The JCQ awarding bodies will update this supplementary guidance as soon as possible should the relevant public health guidance change.

Special consideration when a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason

Candidates **must** be reminded that the awarding of a grade through the special consideration process can only be made where they are absent from an examination or non-examination assessment unit for an acceptable reason.

A candidate who is self-isolating in line with the Welsh Government guidance at the time of the examination is considered to be absent from the examination for an acceptable reason. Candidates are advised to take a lateral flow test (LFT) if they have any of the **main symptoms** of COVID-19 and to self-isolate if their LFT result is positive. If their LFT result is negative they are **not** required to self-isolate, and would therefore not be considered absent from the examination for an acceptable reason, unless they were too ill to take their examination.

Evidencing candidates' eligibility for special consideration

The JCQ awarding bodies will be adapting Form 14 -JCQ/ME - *Self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination* to assist centres in dealing with candidates who are absent from an examination for an acceptable reason in line with Welsh Government guidance. Centres will expect parents/carers/guardians and candidates to complete the relevant sections of the form.

Centres can verify the candidate's circumstances, where provided in Form 14 as in any exam series, to process an application for special consideration using the category 'absent candidate'.

Minimum requirements for a candidate to receive a grade through the special consideration process

Section 4.3. page 8 of this document outlines the minimum requirements for an adjustment to be made to the grade where a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason.

However, for the June 2022 examination series, due to the exceptional circumstances, the awarding bodies **will award a grade where eligible candidates have completed and submitted the assessment(s) for at least one whole unit within the specification.**

As in all previous standard examination series, a qualification award **will not** be made where none of the formal awarding body set examinations/assessments within a specification have been completed by the candidate and submitted by the centre.

Additional information

Where a centre suspects the authenticity of the details provided by a candidate within Form 14, they should investigate the matter as suspected candidate malpractice using the standard **JCQ policy and procedure**.

Candidates should be made aware that their results can be withdrawn, or they can be disqualified if they provide false information on eligibility for special consideration.

Examples of possible scenarios:

Example 1

An A-level candidate is unwell and has a high temperature on the day of one of their A-level examinations.

The candidate takes a lateral flow test (LFT) and the test result is positive.

The candidate **reports the positive LFT result** and contacts the centre to inform them they are self-isolating for three days in line with Welsh Government guidance and will be absent from their A-level examination.

On days 3 and 4 the candidate no longer has a high temperature, takes further LFTs and the result for both tests is negative.

The candidate **reports the negative LFT result** and contacts the centre to inform them they are no longer self-isolating in line with Welsh Government guidance and will be present for their next A-level examination.

The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their illness using Form 14.

The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.

As the candidate's examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days they will be able to receive A-level grades based on the other units completed.

Example 2

An A-level candidate has a continuous cough on the day of their examination.

The candidate takes a lateral flow test (LFT) and the test result is negative.

The candidate **reports the negative LFT result** and attends their A-level examination as they feel well enough to do so.

Example 3

A GCSE candidate has one of the main Covid-19 symptoms, as outlined in the Welsh Government's guidance, on the day of their examination.

The candidate does not have access to a lateral flow test (LFT) due to extenuating circumstances and contacts their centre for advice.

The centre refers the candidate to the Welsh Government's guidance. The candidate is advised to acquire a lateral flow test (LFT) as soon as possible and to self-isolate until they take the LFT.

The following day the candidate receives and takes the LFT and the test result is negative.

The candidate **reports the negative LFT result** and no longer needs to self-isolate and can therefore be present for their next GCSE examination.

The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their illness using Form 14 as they had one of the main Covid-19 symptoms on the day of their GCSE examination, and they followed Welsh Government guidance to self-isolate until they had taken a lateral flow test.

The centre submits an online application for special consideration for the missed GCSE examination to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.

As the candidate's examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days they will be able to receive GCSE grades based on the other units completed.

Example 4

A GCSE candidate has a high temperature five days before their first GCSE examination.

The candidate takes a lateral flow test (LFT) on the day they noted their high temperature. The LFT result is positive.

The candidate **reports the positive LFT result** and contacts the centre to inform them they are self-isolating for 3 days in line with Welsh Government guidance and will be absent from their GCSE examination.

On day 3 the candidate takes a further LFT and the result is positive. The candidate **reports the positive LFT result** and tests again on days 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8. The LFT results on days 4, 5 and 6 are still positive and the candidate **reports the positive LFT results**. The LFT results on both days 7 and 8 are negative.

The candidate **reports the negative LFT results** and contacts the centre to inform them they are no longer self-isolating in line with Welsh Government guidance and will be present for their next GCSE examination.

The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their illness using Form 14.

The centre submits an online application for special consideration for the missed GCSE examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.

As the candidate's examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days they will be able to receive GCSE grades based on the other units completed.

Example 5

An A-level candidate has a positive COVID-19 test result, has recorded the result and is unwell, experiencing a high temperature, but wishes to attend their examination.

The centre refers the candidate to the Welsh Government's guidance. The candidate is advised to self-isolate for 3 days and not attend their A-level examinations until they have two negative test results in a row, taken a day apart, or until day 10 – whichever is sooner.

The centre reassures the candidate about their eligibility for special consideration. As the candidate's examinations are spaced by at least 10 days in every A-level subject, grades can be awarded on the other completed units.

The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.

Awarding bodies' contact details

For any queries on the special consideration process, the awarding bodies' contact details are:

AQA

Tel: 0800 197 7162

Website: www.aqa.org.uk

OCR

Tel: 01223 553 998

Website: www.ocr.org.uk

Pearson

Tel: 0344 463 2535

Website: <http://qualifications.pearson.com>

WJEC

Tel: 02920 265 000

Website: www.wjec.co.uk