



Joint Council for  
Qualifications<sup>CIC</sup>

# FAQs – special consideration, June 2022 series (Wales)

First published May 2022

For the attention of heads of centre,  
senior leaders and examination officers in Wales

Produced on behalf of:



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## 1 What measures have been put in place to ensure that candidates can sit their timetabled assessments?

A range of measures has been put in place this summer to support candidates taking GCSE, AS and A level assessments and 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. The relevant awarding bodies will have published these measures.

## 2 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. There are two categories of special consideration:

- for 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 JCQ's [guidance on the special consideration process](#))
- or
- for 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 JCQ's [guidance on the special consideration process](#))

## 3 Which candidates are eligible for special consideration?

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 **at the time of the assessment**. Section 2, page 4 of JCQ's [guidance on the special consideration process](#) includes a list of such adverse circumstances as well as examples of when candidates would not be eligible for special consideration.

#### **4 Is there additional guidance on eligibility for special consideration in the context of COVID-19?**

JCQ has provided supplementary guidance for centres in Wales on page 23 of [JCQ's guidance on the special consideration process](#) in the context of the June 2022 examination series and Welsh Government's [Self-isolation: guidance for people with COVID-19 and their contacts](#)

A candidate who is staying at home and avoiding contact with others, in line with Welsh Government guidance, at the time of the examination, is considered to be absent from the examination for an acceptable reason. The relevant extract from the guidance is outlined below:

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

#### **5 What is the minimum requirement for a candidate to receive a grade through the special consideration process this summer?**

Due to the exceptional circumstances this summer, the awarding bodies will award a grade where eligible candidates who are absent for an acceptable reason have completed and submitted the assessment(s) for at least one whole unit within the specification, even if the completed component/unit contributes less than 25% to the overall qualification.

#### **6 How will a candidate's grade be awarded if they are eligible for special consideration due to being absent for an acceptable reason for the examination in a whole unit within a specification this summer?**

As in any exam series, when a student is eligible for special consideration when they are absent from an examination/assessment for an acceptable reason, the awarding bodies will produce marks for the student's missing examination/assessment in the qualification based on:

- the marks the student has been awarded for their completed and submitted awarding body exams/assessments for the other units in the specification
- and**
- the student's performance in their completed and submitted awarding body exams/assessments in that qualification compared to all other students.

**7 Would a candidate who was worried about other candidates in the exam room having COVID-19, or any other illness, be eligible for special consideration?**

Where a candidate chooses not to enter the exam room because he/she is concerned that other candidates may have COVID-19, or any other illness, this **would not** be an acceptable reason for missing the examination. The candidate **would not** be eligible for special consideration.

**8 A candidate tests positive for COVID-19 but wants to sit their examination. What should the centre do?**

If a candidate has tested positive for COVID-19 or is unwell with any of the main Covid-19 symptoms, Welsh Government guidance is clear that he/she should stay at home. The candidate should not attend examinations for the time period recommended by Welsh Government and in line with the points outlined in the answer to question 4 above.

A candidate who is staying at home and avoiding contact with others, in line with Welsh Government guidance, at the time of the examination, is considered to be absent from the examination for an acceptable reason.

The centre should provide the candidate with the Form 14 -JCQ/ME - *Self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination* (for centres in Wales). The candidate will complete the form and, if aged 18 and under, their parent/carer/guardian will also complete the form.

**9 What evidence is required if a candidate is absent from an assessment for an acceptable reason?**

The centre will make an application for special consideration if they are confident that the candidate meets the criteria as detailed in JCQ's guidance on the special consideration process.

The JCQ awarding bodies have adapted Form 14 - JCQ/ME - *Self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination* (for centres in Wales) to additionally 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 may request the NHS confirmation from the student or their parent/carer/guardian that the result of their lateral flow test has been reported.

**10 What should centre staff do if they are concerned about the reliability of the information provided by a candidate on Form 14?**

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.

If the malpractice investigation concludes that the candidate provided false information on eligibility for special consideration, the candidate's results could be withdrawn, or the candidate could be disqualified from the specific qualification, and potentially other qualifications.

**11 Can candidates receive a qualification grade, via the special consideration process, if they do not complete and submit all the formal awarding body set examinations/assessments for at least one entire component/unit within the specification?**

As is normal in a standard examination series, candidates are expected to complete examinations/assessments to receive a grade, which will be submitted to the awarding body by the centre. Centre staff **should** wherever possible encourage candidates to attend their examinations.

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.

Candidates will only be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course (including any adaptations put in place for the summer 2022 series) but performance in the examination, or in the production of coursework or non-examination assessment, is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control **at the time of the assessment**.

The special consideration process will only apply for a candidate who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment is:

i. present for the examination/non-examination assessment but disadvantaged

or

ii. absent from the examination/non-examination assessment for an acceptable reason.

Due to the exceptional circumstances this summer, the awarding bodies will award a grade where eligible candidates who are absent for an acceptable reason have completed and submitted the assessment(s) for at least one whole unit within the specification, even if the completed component/unit contributes less than 25% to the overall qualification.

Please also refer to the **JCQ guide to the special consideration process** (appendix 2, page 25) where you will find examples of possible scenarios.