

Special Considerations Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy outlines the arrangements for special consideration to be given to learners in relation to qualifications that the JPIE makes available – including:

- how a learner qualifies for special consideration *and*
- what special considerations will be given.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all centre staff involved in the delivery and assessment of JPIE qualifications and all registered learners.

1.3 Definition

Special Consideration is consideration to be given to a learner who has temporarily experienced:

- An illness or injury *or*
- Some other event outside of the learner's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that learner's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration can only seek to go some way to assist a learner affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may influence performance in scheduled assessments. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the learner. There will be situations where learners should not be entered for an assessment or where it may be appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date.

Special consideration should neither give the learner an unfair advantage, nor should its use cause the user of the certificate to be misled regarding a learner's achievements. The learner's result must reflect his/her achievement in the assessment and not necessarily his/her potential ability.

Special consideration, if successful, may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. Only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would undermine the standard of the assessment.

The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances and reflect the difficulty faced by the learner.

1.4 Confidentiality and data protection

In following the special consideration procedure, a learner might provide or be asked to provide the JPIE with special category personal data. Learners can be assured that the JPIE will comply fully with data protection regulations to ensure that confidential information is kept securely and used only for the purposes for which it is intended.

2. Eligibility criteria

A learner who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the learner – for example, recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment
- reasonable adjustment arrangements, agreed in advance of the assessment, proved inappropriate or inadequate
- part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the learner
- there is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the learner could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

A learner will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- no evidence is supplied by the centre that the learner has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
- any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements, including holidays or unauthorised absence
- preparation for a component is affected by difficulties during the course – for example, disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

3. Applying for special consideration

A centre should apply for special consideration using the Special Consideration Application Form (see Appendix 1).

A separate form should normally be completed for each learner for each qualification. However, in cases where a group of learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event (for example, a fire alarm) a single form should be submitted.

The learner needs to submit evidence in support of special consideration. This may include medical evidence or a statement from the invigilator or any other appropriate information.

The application should be signed and dated by the Main Centre Contact (or other member of staff with sufficient authority). The signatory must declare that the information given is accurate.

The application for special consideration should be submitted as soon as possible after the assessment and not later than seven working days after the assessment.

Requests for special consideration may only be accepted after the results of the assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the Main Centre Contact
- medical evidence comes to light about a learner's condition, which demonstrates that the learner must have been affected by the condition at the time of the assessment, even though the problem revealed itself only after the assessment
- for online assessments where results are immediately available.

If the application for special consideration is successful, the learner's performance will be reviewed in the light of available evidence. It should be noted that a successful application of special consideration will not necessarily change a learner's result.

4. Allowances

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of marks. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or incident. The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the total raw marks available for the assessment.

The decision made by the JP IE will be based on the following factors such as:

- the severity of the circumstances
- the date of the assessment in relation to the circumstances
- the nature of the assessment.

Special consideration cannot be applied cumulatively - for example, based on a domestic crisis at the time of the assessment and the candidate suffering from a viral illness.

The following are the allowances and examples of related circumstances that 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 learner
- terminal illness of a parent/carer
- death of a member of the immediate family within two months of the assessment
- very serious and disruptive crisis/incident at or near the time of assessment.

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 assessment
- severe disease
- the very recent death of a member of extended family (within one month of the assessment taking place)
- severe or permanent bodily injury occurring at the time of the assessment
- serious crisis/incident at the time of the assessment.

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

- recent traumatic experience such as the 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 assessment
- recent crisis/incident
- witnessing a distressing event on the day of the assessment.
 - N.B. 'Recent' is defined as four months prior to the assessment(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 assessment
- broken limb on the mend
- concussion
- effects of pregnancy (not pregnancy per se)
- extreme distress on the day of an assessment (not simply exam-related stress)

1% Reserved for more minor problems:

- noise during the assessment which is more than momentary
- illness of another learner that leads to disruption in the assessment room
- stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed
- hay fever on the day of a scheduled assessment
- minor upset arising from administrative problems.

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

5. Appeals

Learners have a right to appeal against a decision not to grant a special consideration request. Initially, the centre's own appeals procedures should be implemented. If necessary, the centre should then contact the JPIE on the learner's behalf, which will trigger the JPIE Enquiries and Appeals Policy and Procedure. Copies of all documents pertaining to learner appeals should be retained by the centre for three years.

6. Malpractice and maladministration

A centre should note that failure to comply with the guidance regarding special considerations set out by the JPIE has the potential to constitute malpractice or maladministration.

Failure to comply is defined as any or all of the following:

- failing to make special consideration requests by the required deadlines
- making a special consideration request that fails to meet the eligibility criteria
- failing to maintain records of special considerations for audit.

Any such incidents will result in an investigation (see the JPIE Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Procedures).

Appendix A

Special Consideration Application Form

To be complete by the centre for special considerations that must be permitted by JPIE.

Please complete a separate form for each learner (unless a group of learners has been disadvantaged by a particular event – in which case, list the learners affected at the end of this form) and send a completed copy with relevant supporting evidence to JPIE as soon as possible after the assessment.

Centre Name:		Centre ID:	
Learner Name:		Learner ID:	
		Class ID	
		Exam Date	

Qualification ID	Level	Qualification Title	Module Name

Summary of the adverse circumstances affecting performance in the assessment

Evidence in support of the application. This may include:

- medical or psychological evidence
- statement from the invigilator