

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION & ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS POLICY

In order to provide fair access to assessments, either in internal assessments (non-examination assessment, coursework, assignments etc.) or external assessments (exams or tests set by an Awarding Body) it may be necessary to provide access arrangements by making reasonable adjustments to the circumstances of the assessment or notify the Awarding Body of difficulties during the assessment (Special Consideration.)

Special Consideration

- Special Consideration is a post-examination adjustment to a candidate's mark or grade to reflect temporary injury, illness or other indisposition at the time of the examination/assessment.
- Adverse circumstances can include illness at the time of an assessment, recent bereavement or serious disruption to an examination.
- 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 jeopardise the standard of the examination.
- Special consideration may also be given if a candidate is absent from an examination with good reason and has completed the minimum proportion of the assessment required (as stipulated by the Awarding Body.)
- Applications for special consideration are made by the Examinations Officer provided there is evidence that the assessment may have been affected by circumstances described in the JCQ publication 'A guide to the special consideration process'.
- A candidate or parent may notify the Examinations Officer of any such circumstances.
- The Examinations Officer will decide on whether an application is justified in consultation with the Assistant Vice Principal (Exams). If an application cannot be supported, the student and parent will be informed. Students have a right of appeal against this decision, which must be made to the Principal within 7 days of the original decision not to apply being sent to the student.
- The decision on whether to award special consideration is made by the Awarding Body and not usually notified to the school until results are issued.
- If special consideration is awarded, the Awarding Body will enhance a candidate's mark for a particular exam by a maximum of 5% of the total raw mark: the Awarding Body will refer to a standard tariff when deciding on the enhancement. The school is not notified of the value of the special consideration applied.

Access Arrangements

- Access Arrangements are pre-examination adjustments for candidates based on evidence of need and normal way of working. Access Arrangements fall into two distinct categories: some arrangements are delegated to centres, others require prior JCQ awarding body approval.
- Access Arrangements allow candidates/learners with special educational needs, disabilities or temporary injuries to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment. For example, readers, scribes and Braille question papers. In this way, Awarding Bodies will comply with the duty of the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments'.
- The school makes applications for access arrangements based on learning needs identified by the SENCO and on other needs identified by other members of staff.
- The SENCO or the designated specialist teacher assesses the need for access arrangements. Evidence from people not employed by the school must be assessed by the SENCO and cannot provide grounds in itself for awarding an access arrangement.
- We organise access arrangements as soon as the need is identified. Thus, arrangements may be put in place from Year 7, without a need to apply to Awarding Bodies for a formal arrangement until the student is being prepared for public examinations.
- Students can overcome the disadvantage that necessitates the access arrangement and in such cases the access arrangement must be removed so that the student is not given an unfair advantage over others.
- In making access arrangements the school has to balance the needs of all students in providing reasonable, cost-effective and fair arrangements to all students, acting in all cases to ensure the integrity of the qualification.
- In public examinations and in formal internal examinations in Years 10 – 13, the Examinations Officer implements access arrangements.

Reasonable adjustments

- The Equality Act 2010 requires an Awarding Body to make reasonable adjustments where a disabled person would be at a substantial disadvantage in undertaking an assessment and the school will ask for such adjustments to be made when they are both reasonable and necessary.
- A reasonable adjustment for a particular person may be unique to that individual and may not be included in the list of available Access Arrangements.
- How reasonable the adjustment is will depend on a number of factors including the needs of the disabled candidate/learner. An adjustment may not be considered reasonable if it involves unreasonable costs, timeframes or affects the security or integrity of the assessment.
- There is no duty on the Awarding Bodies to make any adjustment to the assessment objectives being tested in an assessment.
- The Examinations Officer will investigate any requests for reasonable adjustments and work with the Awarding Body to ensure that such adjustments are implemented.

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<i>Role</i>	<i>Assistant Vice Principal</i>