



1536



1701

THE COOPERS' COMPANY AND COBORN SCHOOL

Love as Brethren

Headteacher: Ms Sue Hay, BA (Hons), PGDip, NPQH, NPQEL

St Mary's Lane, Upminster, Essex RM14 3HS

| Tel: 01708 250500 | Email: info@cooperscoborn.org.uk | Website: www.cooperscoborn.org.uk |

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Dear Parent / Guardian,

Re: Special consideration

Sometimes, when children take their GCSE or A-level examinations, it is necessary to submit a special consideration application on their behalf. Schools do this when there is an event, such as illness or bereavement that is likely to affect the student's performance on that examination. If special consideration is granted, exam boards will consider the effect of the event on the student's performance when awarding a final grade.

We are writing to you today to explain this process and to give you the opportunity to make special consideration application/s, if deemed necessary.

Mitigating circumstances / special consideration

Special consideration recognises students that may have been affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional and physical, which may have influenced their performance in their assessments. Students will be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but the performance in the examination, is materially affected by adverse circumstances.

Examples of special circumstances 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 closely involved will be eligible);
- Domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment;
- Accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper, failure of practical equipment, failure of materials to arrive on time;
- 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.

This information is in reference to the JCQ's [A guide to special consideration process](#) and further examples of what is and what is not considered as special consideration can be found within this document.

Key information from JCQ about special consideration:

- Special consideration is an 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.
- It can only be applied where the candidate's performance has been adversely affected i.e., has prevented them from demonstrating their normal level of attainment.
- Only minor adjustments can be made, as to make larger adjustments would jeopardise the standard of the qualification. The maximum adjustment is 5%, which is reserved for most exceptional cases.
- The mark awarded might not reflect the candidate's true 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.



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Examples of circumstances not eligible for special consideration are as follows:

- 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 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 during the examination caused by another student, such as bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
- The consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
- The consequences of disobeying the school's internal regulations;
- Misreading the instructions on the paper and answering the wrong questions;
- Missing all examinations;
- A disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) unless illness affects the student at the time of the examination 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).

How is special consideration applied and what allowance can be made

Special consideration is given by applying an allowance of additional marks to the individual examination affected. The size of the allowance depends on the timing, nature and extent of the illness or misfortune.

The range of allowance given is 1-5%. The maximum allowance that can be given is 5% and this is reserved for the most exceptional and serious cases such as terminal illness of the candidate/parent/carer, death of a member of the immediate family within three months of the examination. The most common category of allowance is 1% / 2% for illness at the time of the assessment, broken limb, concussion, extreme distress (not exam related).

Furthermore, a missing mark can be estimated when a candidate is absent (for an acceptable reason) from a unit or a component in either a modular or linear specification. In these cases, a mark is calculated for the missing unit provided the student has completed enough of the specification to meet the minimum requirements specified by JCQ – this is known as a 'z-score'. The calculation of the missing mark takes into account the student's performance in the other comparable units of the exam and the national average of those units. The assumption is that the student will perform as well – no better, no worse - on the paper with the missing mark compared to their performance on the other papers when compared to the national cohort.

This method is considered to be fair and consistent, and is applied the same way by all exam boards offering GCSEs and A-level qualifications.

An example of how this would work can be found at the following link: [click here](#).

If absent from a timetabled component for acceptable reasons, the minimum requirements for enhanced grading (estimating a missing mark) is that one whole component, which is a minimum of 15% of the total assessment **must** have been completed.

Candidates will only be eligible for special consideration if they have been fully prepared and covered the whole course but performance in the exam is affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.



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In the event of a student being absent on the day of an examination, we will require the student to complete the [self-certification form](#) which will assist us when submitting an application to the exam board. We have to highlight that should a candidate be found to be falsifying absence this will constitute malpractice.

Please note that exam boards only advise that special consideration has been awarded on the results information not what percentage they have been awarded.

How applications are made

Given the above, we have put in place a formal process which requires the completion of a form:

[Year 11;](#)

[Year 13.](#)

In addition to completing the form, to ensure we are compiling with exam boards' protocol, we will require to see sight of and retain evidence (as this may be called upon by an exam board) to support any application. With this in mind, please ensure that any supporting documentation is with the school's exams office as soon as possible but no later than two working days following submission of the google form. Please note that, even if the school is already aware of any mitigating circumstances, this form must still be completed.

Upon receipt of the relevant documentation, the school's exams office will submit all special consideration applications direct to the exam board/s. Please note that exam boards will not enter into discussion with candidates and / or their parents on any matters relating to the special consideration process.

Important notes

- If a student thinks they may be eligible for special consideration, they should discuss this with their Head of Year / Head of Key stage as the school must support any application submitted.
- An examiner does not apply special consideration when marking an exam, as this has to be done post-marking by the special consideration team.
- Grades that are predicted by the school cannot be used in the calculations by the exam boards. This is to ensure that all students are assessed according to the same criteria and that the standard of the exam is upheld when awards are made.
- Special consideration can only ever go some way towards compensating a student who has been disadvantaged during an exam. It is not always possible to reflect what might have been achieved in more favourable circumstances.

If you have any further questions regarding this process, please feel free to contact a member of the exams team, head of year and / or head of key stage. In the meantime, we would like to take this opportunity in wishing each and every student the best of luck in their forthcoming examinations.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. J. Edwards
Deputy Headteacher (i/c of exams)

Mrs. A. Titley
Examinations and Data Manager