

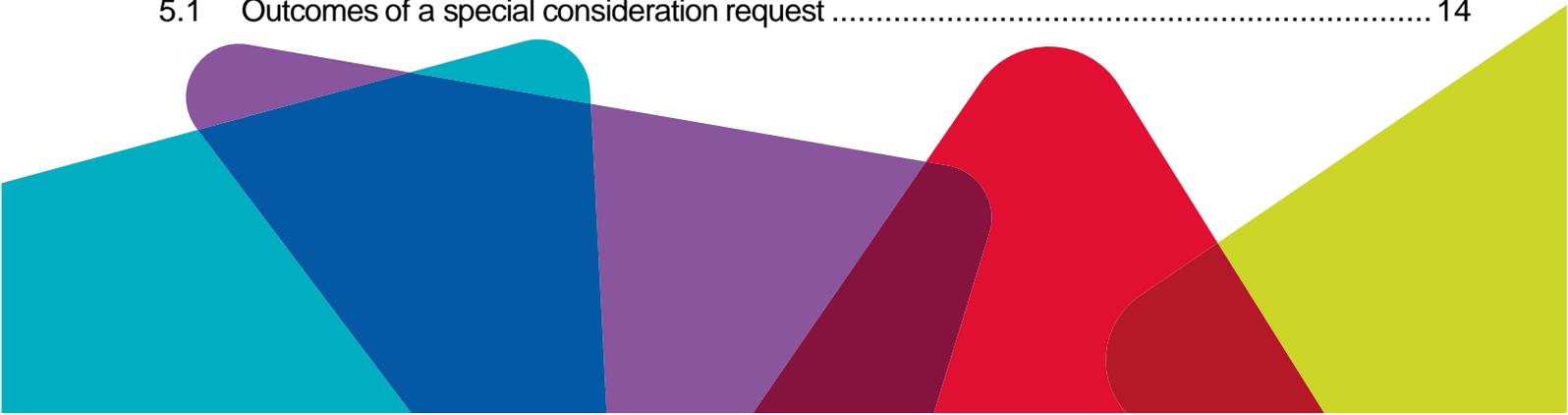
# Special Considerations Policy

**April 2021**

Printed versions are not subject to version control. Please see [website](#) for most up-to-date version.

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## Introduction

### Special Considerations Policy

Date approved	
Approved by	
Review date	April 2021
Responsible Manager	Head of Quality Assurance
Responsible Director	
Accessible to	Colleagues, External Stakeholders, Customers

### Policy statement

This policy sets out NCFE's framework for dealing with special considerations requests, by outlining the processes and procedures for our customers.

### Applicability of policy

This policy applies to:

- NCFE/CACHE Awarding Organisation
- external stakeholders, including our customers
- any future business units or subsidiaries.

### Scope and purpose of policy

The policy relates to all Awarding operations within and across the NCFE Group. The policy forms part of NCFE's Quality Assurance arrangements by allowing our customers, on behalf of a learner, to submit a special considerations request.

### Linked policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Appeals Policy
- Maladministration and Malpractice Policy
- Access Arrangements & Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Complaints Procedure

### Location and access to the policy



The Special Considerations Policy is located on our website [www.qualhub.co.uk](http://www.qualhub.co.uk).

**Persons responsible for the policy**

- Responsible Officer
- Head of Quality Assurance.



## Summary of Changes

Previous version February 2021v2

Additions to the policy are highlighted.

Section	Previous version	New version
Introduction	Not previously included	Section added including applicability, scope and linked policies.
3.6	The centre should also complete the appropriate form if they are in a position in which they are unable to access student work that has been removed from site due to increased chances of spreading COVID- 19.	Amendment to section on lost or damaged work. This reference was specific to Covid 19 in the 2019-2020 session and is now addressed via current Covid 19 procedures.
5.2	Not previously included	Section added introducing potential percentage uplift where an external assessment has taken place.
5.3	Not previously included	Content outlines the conditions in which different percentage uplifts may be applied.
5.4	Not previously included	Content explains the use of replacement grades where applicable in circumstances where a learner has missed an external assessment for an acceptable reason.
5.5	Not previously included	Outline of the potential response to a special consideration for an internally assessed component.
Appendix B	Not previously included	A list of qualifications where replacement grades and percentage uplifts can be applied as part of the special consideration process where a learner is eligible.



## **Section 1: Overview and scope of the policy**

### **1.1 What is the scope and purpose of the policy?**

This policy is aimed at our customers, including learners, who are using NCFE products and services and who submit requests for special considerations.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- support centres with submitting a special consideration request to NCFE
- provide centres with details on the process we follow when reviewing a request and advising you of a decision

### **1.2 What products and services are covered by this policy?**

This policy covers the delivery of NCFE qualifications, which are subject to scrutiny and enforcement by our qualifications regulators (regulated qualifications), and unregulated products which are owned and / or accredited by NCFE. All NCFE products include those that may be offered and / or delivered under an NCFE-owned brand name (for example 'CACHE').

### **1.3 Who needs to know about the policy?**

The centre must make centre staff (including centre, satellite, sub contract centres or contractual staff) who are involved in the design, delivery, management, assessment and quality assurance of our products and your learners aware of, and familiar with the contents of the policy.

### **1.4 How can we obtain copies of the policy?**

You can download copies of the policy from [www.qualhub.co.uk](http://www.qualhub.co.uk). Centres can request copies from our Customer Support Team on 0191 239 8000 or by emailing [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk).

### **1.5 Review of the policy**

We review this policy regularly and may revise it as required in response to changes in legislation, changes in our practices, actions from our regulatory or external agencies, and / or in response to customer and stakeholder feedback.

This document is subject to revision and is maintained electronically. Electronic copies are version controlled, however printed copies are not subject to this control.



## 1.6 Complaints

We have a separate complaints process which covers our centres' or learners' dissatisfaction with our products or services, other than those categories listed in Section 1.1 of this policy.

You can view our **Complaints Procedure** document via [www.qualhub.co.uk](http://www.qualhub.co.uk).



## Section 2: Definition

### 2.1 Overview

The Equality Act 2010 requires Awarding Organisations to make special considerations to ensure learners who have not been able to demonstrate their usual level of abilities at the time of an assessment, due to extenuating circumstances, illness or injury, as defined in the Act, are not placed at a **substantial** disadvantage in comparison to learners whose assessment performance has not been compromised.

The provision for special considerations are made to ensure that learners receive recognition of their achievement so long as the equity, validity, and reliability of the assessments can be assured. Such arrangements are neither concessions to make assessments easier for learners nor advantages to benefit the learners.

### 2.2 Definition of special considerations

Special considerations can be applied after an assessment if there is a reason the learner may have been disadvantaged during the assessment. Reasons for special consideration could be temporary illness, injury or adverse circumstances which has impacted on the learner's ability to demonstrate their usual level of attainment at the time of the assessment.

Learners cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty.

Special consideration should not give the learner an unfair advantage. The learner's result must reflect the learner's achievement in the assessment and not necessarily the learner's potential ability.

Special consideration may result in a small post-assessment adjustment to the mark of the learner. The size of the adjustment will depend on the circumstances during the assessment and will reflect the difficulty faced by the learner, but will always be a minor adjustment as to do more may jeopardise the standard.

Where an assessment requires a competence, criterion or standard to be met fully, or in the case of qualifications that confer a Licence to Practise, **it may not be possible** to apply special consideration. It may be more appropriate to offer the learner an opportunity to retake the assessment at a later date or to extend the assessment period so that the learner has more time to complete the assessment activity.

All learners regardless of their special consideration must still meet our minimum requirement for the award of a certificate.



## Section 3: Requesting a special consideration

### 3.1 How to submit a special consideration request

To request a special consideration, you should complete the appropriate request form on [www.qualhub.co.uk](http://www.qualhub.co.uk) > Policies & Documents > Forms > Request for Special Considerations

### 3.2 Which requests are eligible for special consideration?

Learners may be eligible for special consideration if their ability at the time of the assessment has been affected by an event outside of their control. NCFE will review all applications on a case-by-case basis. The list below is neither exhaustive nor definitive, but we may accept the following:

- 3.2.1 bereavement at the time of the assessment;
- 3.2.2 temporary illness, accident or injury at the time of the assessment;
- 3.2.3 domestic crisis which arises at the time of the assessment;
- 3.2.4 serious disturbance arising during the assessment;
- 3.2.5 an error or accidental event such as being supplied with the incorrect assessment paper, defective materials, or failure to conduct the assessment due to materials not arriving on time;

### 3.3 Which requests are not eligible for special consideration?

The below list, whilst not exhaustive or definitive, details requests for special considerations which we will not accept:

- 3.3.1 minor disturbance during the assessment, such as a mobile phone ringing or momentary distraction caused by another learner;
- 3.3.2 long term illness, unless the illness manifests at the time of the assessment;
- 3.3.3 bereavement which occurs more than six months before the assessment, unless there are any on-going implications as a result of the bereavement, such as a court case;
- 3.3.4 general domestic inconveniences, such as moving house;
- 3.3.5 lack of preparation on behalf of the centre. This includes staff shortages, lack of facilities, failure to adhere to assessment timetables or conducting the assessment at the correct time and/or place;
- 3.3.6 personal arrangements, such as a wedding or holiday (this includes centre activities such as field trips);
- 3.3.7 the consequences of committing a crime whereby formally charged;
- 3.3.8 the consequences of being under the influence of alcohol or recreational drugs;
- 3.3.9 failure to cover tasks or coursework as a result of the learner joining the class part way through;
- 3.3.10 learning difficulties or a disability over and above those that a previously approved access arrangement or reasonable adjustment would have alleviated, unless this affects the learner at the time of the assessment or where the disability exacerbates what would otherwise be a minor issue;



### 3.4 Evidence requirements

Please retain all evidence and make it available to any of our authorised representatives who visit your centre, this includes: External Quality Assurers, External Verifiers, Quality Verifiers, Assessment A u d i t Advisors and Customer Quality Advisors.

In the case of an appeal, you must ensure that evidence to support a special consideration is retained for 3 months after you've been issued with the results of an assessment.

### 3.5 Timescales for submitting a special consideration request

Regarding external assessment please submit your application as soon as possible after the assessment and **no later than** 5 working days after the assessment has taken place or the assessment window has closed. We may also accept special consideration requests for controlled / internal assessments. A request for a special consideration for a controlled / internal assessment should be raised at the earliest opportunity.

We can only accept requests for special consideration after the results of the assessment have been released in the following circumstances:

- 3.5.1 the application has been overlooked at the centre and the oversight is confirmed by the Head of Centre
- 3.5.2 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
- 3.5.3 for on-screen assessments where results are immediately available.

### 3.6 Lost or damaged work

The centre is responsible for learners' work until this has been confirmed by NCFE as part of the appropriate moderation process. Centres should be following Ofqual guidance on student work not being removed from their site due to the current climate.

Under the provision of special considerations and current impact on education, the following information is for schools and colleges in relation to students' non exam-based assessment work which there is any issue in presenting evidence as per the expected qualification moderation process.

It must be noted that if the student is responsible for lost or damaged work the consequence of this negligence will not be eligible for special consideration and the centre will need to work with the student to generate appropriate evidence to be submitted for claiming grades. The same outcome applies in situations where qualifications have professional expectations attached to the studies.



If the school or college is responsible for lost or damage work, then the applicant completing the JCQ form confirms the following:

- The centre is responsible for the loss or damage of the work
- The applicant can verify that the work was either partially completed or fully completed before this was lost or damage
- That this evidence was completed under supervision by the application to be able to verify the outcome of the student work
- Will supply partial work in the instance that lost, or damage has only impacted part of the sample
- That offsite student work is inaccessible due to high infection outcomes can confirm evidence of actual work quality and all avenues for accessing work have been exhausted
- That the student will have other work available during any moderation process to still be included in any external quality reviews
- That the notes on page 2 of the form JCQ/LCW15 have been read and complied with by the applicant

The form that must be completed is the 'notification of lost centre work (JCQ/LCW15)' that is available here. The form must be completed on an individual basis and submitted to [ega@NCFE.org.uk](mailto:ega@NCFE.org.uk).



## **Section 4: Processes and timescales regarding special considerations**

### **4.1 Request for a special consideration**

Once a request for a special consideration is received, NCFE will complete a review of the request and the evidence provided.

### **4.2 Special consideration timescales**

NCFE will aim to review your request within 5 working days of it being received. If this is not possible it will be acknowledged within 2 working days of receipt with notification provided of what action will be taken.

NCFE aims to conclude special consideration requests within 5 working days upon receipt of a fully completed request.

NCFE will inform you if these timescales cannot be adhered to for any reason.



## Section 5: Outcomes regarding special considerations

### 5.1 Outcomes of a special consideration request

The outcome of a special consideration request could be:

- agreement to review the learner's performance considering available evidence
- rejection of your request based on investigation of the circumstances detailed in your request.

Please note that an approved application for a special consideration would not necessarily change a learner's result.

### 5.2 Reviewing a Learner's performance - Learner present for the external assessment but disadvantaged

Where applicable, 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 decision made by NCFE 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 a speaking test is involved.

### 5.3 Reviewing a Learner's performance - Qualifications where eligible learners can be awarded a % uplift on an external assessment.

For applicable qualifications which are numerically marked, one outcome of the special consideration process could be the application of a percentage uplift. The qualifications where this may be applied are listed in appendix B.

The exact % depends on the reason the special consideration is being applied. The maximum uplift we can provide is 5% of the raw marks available for the assessment.

Special consideration cannot be applied cumulatively. For example, because of a recent bereavement at the time of the assessment and the learner suffering from an illness. Special considerations should only be applied for the most serious indisposition.



**5% The maximum allowance**, 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 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 learner 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.

**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.

**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 last paper taken in a day when a learner 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. (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 learner 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.

#### **5.4 Learners who are absent from a timetabled external assessment for acceptable reasons**

When a learner 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, in applicable qualifications. However, the component/unit must have been missed in the terminal series and 25% or more of the qualification must have been completed. NCFE cannot give advice as to whether a learner is fit to take an examination. Centre staff must follow their internal procedures for dealing with learners who feel unwell on the day of an examination.

For unitised examinations taken in an examination series prior to certification, learners 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 as a result of a change of centre.

#### **5.5 Internally Assessed Components**

Where a learner 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.

It is not possible to grant any other special considerations for internally assessed units as the flexible nature of the qualification allows claims to be submitted when the learner is ready to certificate.

#### **5.6 Appeals**

If you or your learners remain dissatisfied following the outcome of the request that you have submitted, you may submit an appeal in line with our Appeals Policy, which is available on [www.qualhub.co.uk](http://www.qualhub.co.uk).

For further information, please contact our Customer Support Team on 0191 239 8000 or at [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk).



## Section 6: Confidentiality of data and information

### 6.1 Data Protection and GDPR

We may need access to confidential information and where this is necessary we will ensure that such information is kept secure, only used for the purposes of the relevant request and handled at all times in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation. We do not disclose confidential information to third parties unless we are required to do so, for example by our regulators, law enforcement or statutory bodies.

When requesting copies of valid supporting evidence of learner need for the purpose to review the request of special consideration, we will do this via a secure file transferring platform. Any learner evidence provided for such requests will be reviewed only for the purposes of special consideration and will be retained for no longer than **30 working days**.

We aim to access and retain original evidence or information; if original records cannot be retained, we will photocopy the original and record the copy as authentic.



## **Section 7: Contact information**

If you have any queries about the contents of the policy, please contact the Customer Support team.

**For NCFE and CACHE products:**

Email: [customersupport@ncfe.org.uk](mailto:customersupport@ncfe.org.uk)

Telephone\*: 0191 239 8000

**Post for NCFE and CACHE products:**

NCFE  
Q6, Quorum Business Park  
Benton Lane  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE12 8BT

\*To continue to improve our levels of customer service, telephone calls may be recorded.



## Appendix A - Our qualifications regulators' details

England:

**Ofqual**

Spring Place  
Herald Avenue  
Coventry  
CV5 6UB

Email [public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk](mailto:public.enquiries@ofqual.gov.uk)

Telephone 0300 303 3344

Wales:

**Qualifications Wales**

Q2 Building  
Pencarn Lane  
Imperial Park  
Coedkernew  
Newport  
NP10 8AR

Email [enquiries@qualificationswales.org](mailto:enquiries@qualificationswales.org)

Telephone 01633 373 222

Northern Ireland:

**CCEA**

The Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA)  
29 Clarendon Road  
Clarendon Dock  
Belfast BT1 3BG

Email [info@ccea.org.uk](mailto:info@ccea.org.uk)

Telephone 028 9026 1200

## **Appendix B - Replacement grades and percentage uplift**

Qualifications where a replacement grade or percentage uplift may be applied as an outcome of the special considerations process are listed below:

- NCFE Level 3 Certificate in Mathematics for Everyday Life 603/3437/X
- T Level Technical Qualification in Science (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/6989/9
- T Level Technical Qualification in Health (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/7066/X
- T Level Technical Qualification in Healthcare Science (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/7083/X
- T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Support Services (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/6901/2
- T Level Technical Qualification in Digital Business Services (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/6902/4
- T Level Technical Qualification in Education and Childcare (Level 3) (Delivered By NCFE) 603/5829/4