



Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustment for BTEC Courses Policy

Originator	Authorised by	Date Adopted	Date of Review	Next Review
Kirsty Holland	Board of Governors	January 2015	January 2022	January 2023

FAO: Assistant Principal - Academic (NJN), Quality Nominee (HBT), Examinations Officer (GMN), Programme Leaders (PL) OCA will follow the JCQ Regulations and Guidance for Access Arrangements Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration.

In the event of a learner not completing BTEC Unit(s) for a specific programme, the Programme leader will meet with the Examinations Officer to identify if one of the following:

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

1.1 A candidate's examination performance can sometimes be affected by circumstances out of their control. Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment that compensates candidates who were suffering from a temporary illness or condition or who were otherwise disadvantaged at the time of the examination. Exams officers may apply for special consideration on a candidate's behalf.

1.2 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 jeopardize the standard of the examination.

1.3 All examinations are measuring what a candidate knows and can do. The overall grades awarded must reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examination(s). The grades awarded do not necessarily reflect the candidate's true level of ability if attainment has been considerably affected over a long period of time.

1.4 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. These include:

- Temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment; 2.1.2 bereavement at the time of the assessment (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible)
- Domestic crisis arising at the time of the assessment
- Serious disturbance during an examination, particularly where recorded material is being used
- Accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper or CD, 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 football or hockey
- Failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.

1.5 Candidates will NOT be eligible for special consideration if preparation for or performance in the examination is affected by:

- 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 occurring 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 in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
 - The consequences of committing a crime, where formally charged or found guilty; (However, a retrospective application for special consideration may be considered where the charge is later dropped or the candidate is found not guilty.)
 - The consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
 - The consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations;
 - The failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason; 2.3.9 staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities;
 - Misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;
 - Misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
 - Making personal arrangements such as a wedding or holiday arrangements which conflict with the examination timetable;
 - Submitting no coursework or non-examination assessment at all, unless coursework or non-examination assessment is scheduled for a restricted period of time, rather than during the course;
 - Missing all examinations and internally assessed components/units;
 - Failure to cover the course as a consequence of joining the class part way through;
 - A disability or learning difficulties (diagnosed or undiagnosed) unless illness affects the candidate at the time of the assessment 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);
 - Failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.
- Candidates who are present for the assessment but disadvantaged

2.1 Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of 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.

2.2 The decision made by the awarding body 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.

2.3 Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion. For example, on the basis of a domestic crisis at the time of the examination and the candidate suffering from a viral illness. Candidates or their parents/carers should, in the first instance, discuss the application of special consideration with the school or college concerned. Private candidates must liaise with the school or college which made entries on their behalf in respect of an application for special consideration. The following are examples of circumstances which 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 candidate;
- 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 candidate 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.

N.B. '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.

N.B. 'Recent' is defined as four months prior to the examination(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 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 candidate 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 (GCSE examinations) or more than 6 hours (GCE examinations).

(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 candidate 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

Candidates who are absent from a timetabled component/unit for acceptable reasons

3.1 When a candidate 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. However, the component/unit must have been missed in the terminal series and the minimum requirements of section 4.3 must be met. Awarding bodies cannot give advice as to whether a candidate is fit to take an examination. Centre staff must follow their internal procedures for dealing with candidates who feel unwell on the day of an examination.

3.2 For unitised examinations taken in an examination series prior to certification, candidates 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.

Other Issues

Other certification

4.1 Where a candidate has been entered for a specification and has subsequently died or is terminally ill and unable to sit examinations/assessments, the centre should contact the relevant awarding body. The awarding body will advise the centre of the process and the information required.

Centres should note that where an awarding body issues an honorary certificate or a letter of recognition this is not a qualification award and will not have any academic value. Coursework/non-examination assessment extensions

Coursework/non-examination assessment extensions

4.2 Where an individual candidate 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.

An extension of no more than ten days to the deadline for the submission of work may enable the candidate to complete his/her work. The centre must contact the relevant awarding body to request this arrangement.

Shortfall in work (coursework/non-examination assessment)

4.3 If a candidate has been subject to an unforeseen prolonged illness or other misfortune during the period when the work was being produced, it may, in some subjects, be possible to accept a reduced quantity of work without penalty. However, all of the assessment objectives must have been covered at least once. This will not be possible if the specification only requires one piece.

Where several pieces of work are required, the reduction will only be accepted if those pieces are testing the same criteria. It will not be possible to give this consideration in every case. For example, if work has not been submitted, the assessment objectives have not been satisfied or the candidate joined the course late.

No adjustment to the marks must be made by the centre. Form 10 – JCQ/SC† should be submitted to the awarding body, attached to a breakdown of marks across the assessment objectives.

Candidates must have been fully prepared for the course but unable to finish the work. Awarding bodies will not normally agree a reduced amount of work in advance.

Lost or damaged work (non-examination assessment components)

4.4 Please refer to the JCQ publication Instructions for conducting non-examination assessments - <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/non-examination-assessments>

Other problems

4.5 There are circumstances which arise by accident and where specialist input may be required. For example, an incorrect question paper was handed to the candidate or a question paper was defective in some way; such as an incorrectly printed page.

These cases are given special consideration by other means than those detailed so far. They may need to be referred to a subject officer or a senior examiner for a subject specific decision as to how special consideration should be awarded. This means that the results may not immediately show the enhancement. An adjustment of marks may have been made to take into account the problem which arose.

4.6 Centres may not realise that a candidate has been given an incorrect question paper. Awarding bodies will notify centres of any discrepancies. If the centre is aware of the error at the time of the examination the candidate should, where possible, be given the correct question paper as long as he/ she is still under centre supervision and is able to continue with the examination.

An application for special consideration should be submitted to the relevant awarding body when the incorrect paper has been taken, the incorrect paper has been replaced by the correct paper or the candidate has taken both. There are circumstances where it is not possible for an awarding body to grant special consideration to candidates who have attempted an incorrect paper.

4.7 Where candidates have taken the wrong coursework or non-examination assessment assignment, the centre may submit an application for special consideration if it is not possible to enter candidates at the next assessment opportunity. There are circumstances where it is not possible for an awarding body to grant special consideration to candidates who have attempted the incorrect coursework or non-examination assessment component

Post assessment adjustments special consideration (Vocational qualifications)

5.1 The awarding of special consideration – vocational qualifications

An awarding body's decision to award special consideration in vocational qualifications will be based on various factors, which may vary from learner to learner and from one assessment to another. These factors may include the severity of the circumstances, the date of the assessment and the nature of the assessment. It is important to note that it may not be possible to apply special consideration where:

- an assessment requires the demonstration of a practical competence;
- the assessment criteria have to be fully met;
- units/qualifications confer 'Licence to Practise'.

Where an assessment has been missed or is in the form of an on-demand test, such as an electronic test set and marked by a computer, the centre should offer the learner an opportunity to take the assessment at a later date. Advice must always be sought from the relevant awarding body.

5.2 Applying for special consideration in vocational qualifications

Applications for special consideration must be made on a case by case basis. Separate applications must be made for each learner. The only exception to this is where a group of learners have been affected by a similar circumstance during an assessment, such as a fire alarm. A list of learners affected must be attached to the application. Applications for special consideration must be submitted to the relevant awarding body using Form VQ/SC. Form VQ/SC is available electronically at: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms> To ensure effective processing of applications centres must additionally submit evidence to support the application. For example, a statement from a member of centre staff or any other appropriate information. The head of centre/Principal/CEO must authorise all applications for special consideration. During the processing of an application, an awarding body will only liaise with the centre making an application for special consideration on behalf of a learner. Special consideration will not be considered once learner achievement has been claimed and certificated.

5.3 Lost or damaged work (internally assessed work)

When a learner's work has been lost or damaged, an awarding body may consider an application for special consideration. In all cases, the centre must be able to verify that the work was done and that it was monitored whilst it was in progress. For competence based qualifications, the centre has a requirement to maintain assessment records independently of the learner's portfolio. In the case of a lost portfolio, these records, together with fully documented question and answer sessions or written statements, as appropriate, can be used to confirm a learner's competence. A portfolio re-created, because evidence has been lost, should be internally verified. The centre must follow the awarding body's published procedures for lost or damaged work.

5.4 Other certification

An honorary certificate should be requested where a learner is terminally ill or deceased. Advice must be sought from the relevant awarding body who will inform the centre of the process.

5.5 To apply for special consideration the 'NQF BTEC form 10' [one for internally assessed units and one for externally assessed] should be completed and signed and sent to uk.special.requirements@pearson.com. For group applications, please check the list of affected candidates:

ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Vocational qualifications - information and guidance for centres

2.1 Which qualifications are covered?

This section relates specifically to vocational qualifications as defined in section 53 of the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 Awarding bodies – vocational qualifications

Section 53 of the Equality Act 2010 states that awarding bodies must not discriminate, harass or victimise when conferring vocational qualifications. Awarding bodies have a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

2.3 What are the duties of awarding bodies?

The duty for an awarding body to make a reasonable adjustment will apply where an assessment arrangement would put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled. In such circumstances, the awarding body is required to take reasonable steps to avoid that disadvantage.

2.4 Application of competence standards

Awarding bodies offering vocational qualifications are allowed to apply competence standards to a disabled person. A competence standard is defined as an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.

The application by an awarding body of a competence standard to a disabled person is not disability discrimination unless it is discrimination by virtue of section 19 of the Equality Act 2010 (re indirect discrimination).

2.5 Taking advice from the awarding body about competence standards

There are subject specific issues relating to vocational qualifications where the centre may need to seek particular advice from the awarding body issuing the qualification.

In the majority of vocational qualifications, a wide range of reasonable adjustments will be available. The arrangements listed in Chapters 5 and 6 may be relevant for some candidates entering for vocational qualifications.

However, there are some important exceptions where the competence standards would be invalidated if an adjustment was made. In particular, reasonable adjustments to vocational qualifications that carry a 'licence to practise' need to be carefully considered so as not to invalidate 'the licence'.

2.6 Recruiting learners with integrity

It is vital that centres recruit with integrity with regard to vocational qualifications. Centres must ensure that learners have the correct information and advice on their selected qualification(s) and that the qualification(s) will meet their needs. The recruitment process must include the centre assessing each potential learner and making justifiable and professional judgements about the learner's potential to successfully complete the assessment and achieve the qualification. Such an assessment must identify, where appropriate, the support that will be made available to the learner to facilitate access to the qualification(s).

Where the recruitment process identifies that the learner may not be able to demonstrate attainment and thus gain achievement in all of the assessments for the selected qualification, this must be communicated clearly to the learner. A learner may still decide to proceed with a particular qualification and not be entered for all or some of the assessments.

Centres must ensure that learners are aware of:

- the range of options available, including any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary, to enable the demonstration of attainment across all of the required assessments; and
- any restrictions on progression routes to the learner as a result of not achieving certain outcomes.

2.7 Guidance on reasonable adjustments

Awarding bodies aim to ensure open access to vocational qualifications for learners who are eligible for reasonable adjustments in assessments, without compromising the assessment of the skills, knowledge, understanding or competence being measured.

A reasonable adjustment is agreed at the pre-assessment planning stage and is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty, which places the learner at a substantial disadvantage.

Reasonable adjustments must not, however, affect the reliability or validity of assessment outcomes nor must they give the learner an unfair assessment advantage over other learners undertaking the same or similar assessments.

The head of centre/Principal/CEO (or designated nominee) must ensure that a reasonable adjustment implemented by the centre on behalf of the learner is based on firm evidence of a barrier to assessment and is in line with this guidance. Failure to do so may result in advice or action for the centre through to the implementation of steps to manage centre malpractice. This could ultimately lead to the recall of certificates, removal of qualification approval or removal of centre approval.

2.8 Reasonable adjustments within vocational qualifications

Vocational qualifications accredit competence against qualification specifications and assessment criteria, and/or National Standards and an approved assessment strategy. Any reasonable adjustment must reflect the normal learning or working practice of a learner in a centre or working within the occupational area.

Learners may, however, use mechanical, electronic and other aids in order to demonstrate competence. The aids must either be generally commercially available, or available from specialist suppliers, and can feasibly be used in the centre or on the employers' premises.

The following adaptations are examples of what may be considered for the purposes of facilitating access, as long as they do not impact on any competence standards being tested:

- adapting assessment materials;
- adaptation of the physical environment for access purposes;
- adaptation to equipment;
- assessment material in an enlarged format or Braille;
- assessment material on coloured paper or in audio format;
- British Sign Language (BSL);
- changing or adapting the assessment method;
- changing usual assessment arrangements;
 - extra time, e.g. assignment extensions;
- language modified assessment material;
- practical assistant;
- prompter;
- providing assistance during assessment;
- reader;
- scribe;
- use of assistive software;
- using assistive technology;
- use of CCTV, coloured overlays, low vision aids;
- use of a different assessment location;
- use of ICT/responses using electronic devices.

It is important to note that not all of the adjustments (as above) will be reasonable, permissible or practical in particular situations. The learner may not need, nor be allowed the same adjustment for all assessments.

Learners should be fully involved in any decisions about adjustments/adaptations. This will ensure that individual needs can be met, whilst still bearing in mind the specified assessment criteria for a particular qualification.

As the needs and circumstances of each learner are different, centres must consider any request for a reasonable adjustment on a case by case basis. Evidence of need will be required.

2.9 Applying reasonable adjustments to internal assessments

For qualifications which are internally assessed, centres or training providers do not need to apply to the awarding body. However, centres must make reasonable adjustments that are in line with the awarding body's policies.

All reasonable adjustments made in relation to internal assessments must be recorded on Form VQ/IA and held on file within the centre for inspection by an awarding body.

Form VQ/IA is available electronically at:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>

Where the centre is unsure if the reasonable adjustment proposed is in line with this guidance, the centre must contact the relevant awarding body for advice.

2.10 How can centres apply for reasonable adjustments for external assessments?

Centres or training providers who wish to apply for a reasonable adjustment in a vocational qualification must make an application to the relevant awarding body at least six weeks before the date of the series in which the assessment is to be taken. Form VQ/EA must be used.

Form VQ/EA is available electronically at:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>

Each application will be considered individually. The response will relate primarily to the effect the requested adjustment might have on the competence and ability being tested in the qualification, as well as the reliability and validity of the assessment.

Some adjustments may not be considered reasonable if they:

- do not meet the published criteria;
- involve unreasonable costs to the awarding body;
- involve unreasonable timeframes; or
- affect the security and integrity of the qualification itself.

For example, Braille papers cannot be produced at short notice. Adjustments must not put in jeopardy the health and well-being of the candidate or any other person.

2.11 Modified papers

To apply for Braille papers, modified enlarged papers, modified language papers or papers adapted for the purpose of using a recording, please submit Form VQ/EA no later than ten weeks before the date of the assessment.

Where it reflects the learner's normal way of working, centres or training providers may provide an A3 enlargement of non-secure materials without requesting the permission of the awarding body.

The language of non-secure materials must not be changed without the prior permission of the awarding body.

Secure question papers must not be opened early without the prior permission of the awarding body.

Form VQ/EA is available electronically at:

<http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements-and-special-consideration/forms>