**Appendix 4: *A guide to the Special Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances 2021***

**Introduction**

Due to formal examinations not taking place this year, the usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding organisations for qualifications will not apply this summer, as special consideration is usually a percentage adjustment to the raw marks of the examinations which are affected.

As the range of evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification, then instances of special consideration should be limited. **Centres should be able to select work completed by a student where they were unaffected by adverse circumstances.**

Where a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student’s control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account and **document how they have done so**.

Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence centres may use to determine students’ grades. Students should only be assessed on the content of the specification covered.

In considering mitigating circumstances and what special consideration can be given, centres must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student’s ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Centres must record how they determined the impact of the misfortune.

Students must be reminded to raise any mitigating circumstances which warrant special consideration. It is important that students raise these issues as soon as possible, ideally **at the time of the assessment and prior to the submission of the teacher assessed grade. (JCQ Guidance on the determination of grades for A/AS Levels and GCSEs for Summer 2021)**

It is worth noting that the basis of issuing of Teacher Assessed Grades in on what a students has been able to demonstrate what they know and can do, not their potential ability.

**Aims**

The following trust guidance aims to fairly manage the consideration of proposed mitigating circumstances raised by students, parents and carers, which have been suggested to have affected a candidate’s portfolio of evidence being used to form a teacher assessed grade. It is based on the arrangements outlined by JCQ in ***A guide to the special consideration process General and Vocational qualifications With effect from 1 September 2020.***

**Section 1**

**What are special consideration and mitigating circumstances?**

The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding organisations for qualifications will not apply this summer, as formal examinations are not taking place.

**During normal working, special consideration is an adjustment to a candidate’s mark or grade to reflect temporary mitigating circumstances such as illness, temporary injury or some other event outside of the candidate’s control at the time of the assessment. It is applied when the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate’s ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.**

Special consideration can go some way to assist a candidate affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may affect performance in their assessment portfolios. It cannot remove the difficulty faced by the candidate. **This means that there will be some situations where** **candidates should not be entered for an examination**. This is because only minor adjustments can bemade to the mark awarded. To make larger adjustments would jeopardize the standard of the examination.

For 2021 special consideration will be given to students who have faced mitigating circumstance which centres are satisfied have had a material affect of a students performance.

Due to the national variability to the effects of COVID-19 on the disruption to learning, OFQUAL have not set out a minimum requirement for the issuing of grades other than stating that candidates must have “sufficient” coverage of the specification.

All examinations measure what a candidate knows and can do. **The overall grade(s) awarded must** **reflect the level of attainment demonstrated in the examboard grade descriptors.** The grades awarded do notnecessarily reflect the candidate’s true level of 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.

**Section 2**

**Which candidates will be eligible for special consideration?**

Teachers must be informed about mitigating circumstances by 14th May ‘21 date by following the sets set out in section 4.

2.1 Candidates will be eligible for special consideration if their performance **in the evidence which is being used to issue a Teacher Assessed Grade**, is materially affected by mitigating circumstances beyond their control. These include:

2.1.1 temporary illness or accident/injury at the time the evidence was generated;

2.1.2 bereavement at the time the evidence was generated (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);

2.1.3 domestic crisis arising at the time the evidence was generated;

2.1.4 serious disturbance during an examination, particularly where recorded material is being used;

2.1.5 accidental events at the time the evidence was generated 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;

2.1.6 failure by the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series.

2.2 **Candidates will NOT be eligible for special consideration** if preparation for, or performance **in the evidence which is being used to issues a Teacher Assessed Grade** is affected by:

2.3.1 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**;

2.3.2 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;

2.3.3 domestic inconvenience, such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays (**including** **school/exchange visits and field trips**) at the time of the assessment;

2.3.4 minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as momentary bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;

2.3.5 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.)

2.3.6 the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;

2.3.7 the consequences of disobeying the centre’s internal regulations;

2.3.8 the failure of the centre to prepare candidates properly for the examination for whatever reason;

2.3.9 quality of teaching, staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities;

2.3.10 misreading the timetable and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;

2.3.11 misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;

2.3.12 making personal arrangements such as a wedding or holiday arrangements which conflict with the examination timetable;

2.3.13 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;

2.3.14 missing all examinations and internally assessed components/units;

2.3.15 failure to cover the course because of joining the class part way through;

2.3.16 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**);

2.3.17 failure by the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.

**Section 3**

**How will special consideration to mitigating circumstances be delivered?**

3.1 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. As 2021 grades are holistic judgements, it is not possible to take a formulaic approach and thus the individual circumstances of the case will be considered and responded to as in section 3.4.

3.2 The decision made by the teacher or the Head of Subject 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;
* 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.

3.3 **Special consideration cannot be applied in a cumulative fashion.** For example, because of arecent trauma at the time of the examination **and** the candidate suffering from a viral illness.

Special consideration should only be applied for the most serious indisposition.

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 about an application for special consideration.

3.4 **Where a candidate was not present for the time of the assessment or disadvantaged at the time, centres may choose to:**

1. Disregard the evidence and use the other range of evidence as the basis of their judgement
2. Provide an opportunity for the candidate to revisit the assessed piece.
3. Use an alternative piece of evidence with a similar characteristic in its place.
4. Place less of a weighting on the evidence when reviewing a student’s portfolio of evidence, in a holistic manner.
5. Amend the evidence base to reflect the narrower coverage of the specification for which the students has had access to.

Where the request for special consideration fails to meet the criteria outlined in Section 2 it will be rejected.

**Section 4**

**Processing applications for special consideration (****Deadline 14th May ’21)**

**Step 1**

Mitigating circumstances should be communicated to the teachers at the school using **TCAT/SC Form 2** and emailing to the following email address mitigating@bridgewaterhigh.com

It is important that you make clear which proposed evidence is affect, why it is believed to have been affected and how.

**Step 2**

The classroom teacher will consider the information provided alongside and explain to you and your child how and if consideration will be given to the mitigating circumstances proposed by 28th May ‘21

**Step 3**

In situations where the proposed mitigating circumstances are not clear or simple to address or you disagree with the response from the teacher, these decisions will be reviewed by a senior leader within the school.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  | **TCAT/SC Form 2** |
| **Application for special consideration** |
| **Centre name** |  | **Candidate name** |  |
| **Candidate No(if known)** |  | **Subject** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Assessment Evidence** for which an application is made (from the document “Teacher Assessed Grades Evidence Overview ’21)  |
| **Evidence Title** | **Date** | **Summary of mitigating circumstances affecting the evidence. (NB ‘See attached’ will NOT suffice.)** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Current medical/psychological evidence is attached | **Yes** | **NO** |
|  |  |  |
| **Declaration:** The information provided is accurate and fully supports the application.  |
| **Parents/Carer Name** |  | **Date** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **For office use** |