



**ORCHARD**  
—Community Trust—



# Watermill School

## Special Consideration and Reasonable Adjustments (Exams) Policy

Policy Information		
Policy Author: Helen Clayton Governing Board approval date/date policy is in effect from: Autumn 2024		
Latest Review information:	Summary of amendments	Date of next review:
November 2024 (HC)	Section for reasonable adjustments added	September 2025 September 2025

**Purpose of the policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to identify roles and responsibilities in the reasonable adjustments and special consideration process and confirms that Watermill school agrees to “submit any applications for special consideration where candidates meet the published criteria.” [JCQ General Regulations for approved centres, section 5.9 (SC)]

Watermill school is committed to complying with all current and relevant legislation, which at the time of writing includes, but is not limited to the Equality Act 2010. Watermill school seeks to provide reasonable adjustments and special considerations for all learners registered on qualifications.

This policy will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity or nationality, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, socio-economic status or any other personal characteristic.

Assessment should be a fair test of learners’ knowledge and what they are able to do, however, for some learners the usual format of assessment may not be suitable. We recognise that reasonable adjustments / access arrangements or special considerations may be required at the time of assessment where:

- learners have evidence of a disability or specific learning needs;
- learners have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs; and
- learners are indisposed at the time of the assessment.

**What is reasonable adjustment?**

A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments are made to an assessment for a qualification to enable a disabled learner to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding of the levels of attainment required by the specification for that qualification.

Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of what needs to be assessed, but may involve: changing usual assessment arrangements, for example;

- adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille;
- providing assistance during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter, scribe, prompter or a reader / shared reader;
- re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic learner;
- changing the assessment method, for example from a written assessment to a spoken assessment;
- using assistive technology, such as screen reading or voice activated software;
- providing the mechanism to have different colour backgrounds to screens for onscreen assessments or asking for permission for copying to different coloured paper for paper-based assessments;
- providing and allowing different coloured transparencies with which to view assessment papers;
- alternative rooming arrangements e.g. a room for a smaller group of candidates with similar needs; and
- use of a word processor.

Reasonable adjustments are approved or set in place before the assessment activity takes place; they constitute an arrangement to give the learner access to the programme. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a learner's work.

To request a reasonable adjustment the learner must be identified to the exam officer by the tutor, providing evidence of why the adjustment is needed. The exams officer, along with the tutor will complete all relevant paperwork and collate all supporting evidence, in line with the awarding bodies (NOCN, aim qualifications and WJEC) policies.

### **What is special consideration?**

Special consideration is a post-examination 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, which 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 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.

[JCQ A guide to the special consideration process, section 1 (SC)]

The following must be considered:

- All applications are made online, and have to meet the requirements set by JCQ in order to be accepted. The decision as to whether to make an application rests with the Exams Officer, whose decision is final.
- The maximum allowance, in the most extreme circumstances, is 5% of the marks for a given paper. In practice, most candidates receive 2% or less.
- For absence a doctor's note is required, and it is recommended that one is obtained for any medical condition.
- The exam boards will never discuss special consideration for individual candidates, and when results are issued it is not possible to determine what allowance, if any, has been granted.
- The deadline for applications is in early July, and the exam boards will not usually accept requests for special consideration made after this date. This date will be confirmed by February half term.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Head of Centre**

- Is familiar with the contents, refers to and directs relevant centre staff to the annually updated JCQ publication (SC)
- Ensures that, where relevant and in eligible situations, applications for special consideration will be submitted to awarding bodies by the exams officer

#### **Exams Officer**

- Understands the criteria as detailed in (SC) to determine where candidates will/will not be eligible for special considerations
- Ensures that, where relevant and in eligible situations, applications for special consideration will be submitted to the awarding bodies

#### **Teaching Staff/SENCo**

- Provide any appropriate evidence or information that may be required to determine a candidate's eligibility for special considerations.

### **Candidates/Parents**

- Provide any medical or other evidence that may be required to determine eligibility for special consideration

## **1. Eligibility for special consideration**

### **Applying for special consideration**

Where eligible, special consideration will be applied for in a specific exam series where candidates "...have been fully prepared and have covered the whole course but performance in the examination, or in the production of controlled assessment, coursework or non-examination assessment, is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control."

Where a candidate may arrive for an exam and is clearly unwell, extremely distressed and/or may have sustained an injury that requires emergency access arrangements to be put in place:

- The candidate will be kept comfortable and under supervision from the required time while appropriate arrangements are put in place for the candidate to take the exam in the best possible conditions
- A judgement will be made on how the candidate's situation or disposition affected performance in the exam
- Where appropriate and where eligible, special consideration will be applied for
  - Where candidates may be affected by a major disturbance in the exam room (emergency evacuation etc.), special consideration will be applied for on behalf of all candidates.
  - Where a candidate may be affected by a minor disturbance in the exam room caused by another candidate (momentary bad behaviour, mobile phone ringing etc.), special consideration cannot be applied for.

If a candidate is absent for acceptable reasons, and the centre can verify this, special consideration will be applied for if the exam missed is in the terminal series and the *minimum requirements for enhanced grading in cases of acceptable absence can be met*. If there is an opportunity to re-enter the candidate in the next available exam series, the centre will make the entry and special consideration will not be applied for

Where other issues or problems affect a candidate or a group of candidates, special consideration will be explored in and applied for where eligible. This might include, for example:

- Other certification
- A short extension to coursework/non-examination assessment deadlines
- Submitting a reduced quantity of coursework/non-examination assessment (shortfall in work)
- Candidates taking an incorrect or defective question paper
- Candidates undertaking the wrong controlled assessment or non-examination assessment assignment

Where a candidate may be eligible for special consideration (a post assessment adjustment) in a vocational qualification, the centre will follow awarding body guidance to determine if, when and how an adjustment can be applied for.

## **2. Processing applications for special consideration**

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **Head of centre**

- Ensures where a candidate may be a member of the family (which includes stepfamily, foster- family and similar close relationships) or a close friend and their immediate family (e.g.son/daughter) of a member of the exams office staff, the application will be authorised by an alternative member of centre staff

#### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Produce/provide signed evidence in support of an application where this may be requested by the awarding body

#### **Exams officer**

- Ensures applications will be processed as required by the awarding bodies
- Keeps evidence to support applications on file until after the publication of results and provides evidence in support of an application where this may be requested by an awarding body
- Meets the required deadline(s) for submitting applications

#### **Teaching staff and/or SENCo**

- Provide any appropriate evidence or information that may be required to support a candidate's application for special consideration

#### **Candidates (or parents/carers)**

- Will be asked to provide any required medical or other evidence that may be required to support an application for special consideration

## **3. Submitting applications for special consideration**

Where a candidate or group of candidates is/are eligible for special consideration, applications will be submitted to the relevant awarding body following the published processes. Evidence to support applications will be kept on file until after the publication of results.

### **Timetabled written exams**

- For Functional Skills qualifications, applications for individual candidates will be submitted online by logging into the relevant awarding body secure extranet site and following the links to special consideration
- The processes for submitting a single application to cover all exams where a candidate is present but disadvantaged and a separate application for each day where a candidate is absent from an examination for an acceptable reason detailed in SC 6 will be followed
- For other qualifications, applications will be submitted online where the awarding body's secure system accepts these
- The paper form 10 JCQ/SC Application for special consideration will only be completed and submitted to the awarding body where the online system does not accept applications for a particular qualification
- For groups of candidates, applications will be made online where the awarding body's secure system accepts group applications or form 10 will be completed

- The paper form 14 Self certification form (Self Certification for candidates who have missed an examination) will only be completed where circumstances warrant this and will not be used where the centre knows the candidate was ill

### **Internally Assessed Work**

- Where appropriate, applications will be made online where the awarding body's secure system accepts them or form 10 will be completed and submitted to the awarding body
- Where a short extension to a deadline is being requested an application will be submitted online or by direct email, dependent on the awarding body
- Where an application relates to a shortfall in work, this will be submitted online or by completing form 10, dependent on the awarding body
- Where an application relates to lost or damaged work, this is submitted online or by completing form 15 JCQ/LCW Notification of lost centre assessed work, dependent on the awarding body

### **4. Post assessment adjustments – vocational qualifications**

Where relevant and eligible, form VQ/SC Application for special consideration Vocational qualifications will be completed and submitted to the awarding body

### **5. Private candidates**

Any private candidate entered by the centre must liaise with the exams officer (not the awarding body) regarding any application for special consideration

### **6. Late Applications**

If, after the publication of results for a particular exam series, a claim is made that special consideration was not applied for at the time of an assessment where a candidate was eligible, the claimant will be informed that late applications will only be accepted by an awarding body in the most exceptional circumstances and where a member of the senior leadership team is able to produce evidence to support the late application.

If a claim is made after the completion of a review of results, the claimant will be informed that an application for special considerations cannot be submitted.