

Appendix 1 Supplementary guidance on the special consideration process for centres in England June 2022 examination series*

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*This supplementary guidance does not apply to centres in Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

For other jurisdictions, the equivalent UK Health Security Agency's guidance should be followed.

A range of measures have been put in place this summer to support candidates taking GCE AS, A-level and GCSE examinations. These measures include:

- advance information on the focus of examinations for most subjects to help candidates revise;
- provision of support materials for some examinations (formulae and equation sheets);
- changes to non-examination assessment and fieldwork requirements in some subjects;
- optional content in some GCSE specifications;
- generous grading in comparison to the June 2019 examination series, providing a safety net for candidates;
- a minimum of ten days between the first and last examination in each GCE AS, A-level and GCSE specification. This will reduce the chance of a candidate missing all examinations in a subject because of illness.

The JCQ awarding bodies providing other general and vocational qualifications have also put a range of measures in place to support candidates taking examinations and assessments this summer. These measures will have been published by the relevant awarding bodies.

Supplementary guidance for the June 2022 examination series

The JCQ awarding bodies operating in England are publishing this supplementary guidance on the application of the special consideration process in the context of the June 2022 examination series and the UK Health Security Agency's *Guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19, or a positive test result for COVID-19*:

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) which was published on 1 April 2022.

This supplementary guidance should be read in conjunction with the other sections of the JCQ publication *A guide to the special consideration process* which sets out the procedures where a candidate has been fully prepared and 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. Centres should also refer to the sections on the application of special consideration tariffs and the processing of applications.

The two categories of special consideration being:

- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is present for the examination/non-examination assessment but disadvantaged; (**see section 3, page 6** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process)
- or**
- a candidate, who on the day of their examination/non-examination assessment, is absent from the examination/non-examination assessment for an acceptable reason (**see section 4, page 8** of this document - JCQ guidance on the special consideration process). This supplementary guidance focuses on absence only.

Key extracts from the UKHSA Guidance as of 1 April 2022

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

It is important that centres read and consider all appropriate UKHSA and other public health guidance. These extracts are included for convenience only.

For children and young people 18 and under:

- “Children and young people with mild symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, who are otherwise well, can continue to attend their education setting.”
- “Children and young people who are unwell and have a high temperature should stay at home and avoid contact with other people, where they can. They can go back to school, college or childcare, and resume normal activities when they no longer have a high temperature and they are well enough to attend.”
- “It is not recommended that children and young people are tested for COVID-19 unless directed to by a health professional.”
- “If a child or young person has a positive COVID-19 test result they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test, if they can.”
- “Children and young people who usually go to school, college or childcare and who live with someone who has a positive COVID-19 test result should continue to attend as normal.”
- For further information on high temperature (fever) in children, please see the NHS website:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/fever-in-children/>

Key extracts from the UKHSA Guidance as of 1 April 2022

People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

It is important that centres read and consider all appropriate UKHSA and other public health guidance. These extracts are included for convenience only.

For adults 19 and over:

- “If you have symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and you have a high temperature or do not feel well enough to go to work or carry out normal activities, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until you no longer have a high temperature (if you had one) or until you no longer feel unwell.”
- For further details on the symptoms of COVID-19 please see the NHS website:

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms in adults - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-symptoms-in-adults/)

- “If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 5 days after the day you took your test. If you have a positive COVID-19 test result, it is very likely that you have COVID-19 even if you do not have any symptoms. You can pass on the infection to others, even if you have no symptoms.”

As is normal in a standard examination series, candidates are expected to complete examinations to receive a grade. Centre staff **should** wherever possible encourage candidates to attend for their examinations. There may be exceptional cases though where this will not be possible, e.g. a temporary illness on the day of the examination.

Centres and candidates should adhere to the UKHSA guidance as it applies on the day of the candidate's examination(s). The JCQ awarding bodies will update this supplementary guidance as soon as possible should the relevant public health guidance change. Centres should also consider any differences in the guidance based on the candidate's age (e.g. 18 and under or 19 and over) and ensure they refer to the right guidance.

Special consideration when a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason

Candidates **must** be reminded that the awarding of a grade through the special consideration process can only be made where they are absent from an examination or non-examination assessment component for an acceptable reason.

A candidate who is staying at home and avoiding contact with others, in line with UKHSA guidance, at the time of the examination, is considered to be absent from the examination for an acceptable reason. This includes candidates who are displaying the symptoms described in the UKHSA guidance as advising them to stay at home (e.g. a high temperature for those aged 18 and under) as well as those with a positive COVID-19 test result.

Where a candidate still wishes to attend an examination, despite having symptoms (e.g. a high temperature) or a positive COVID-19 test the centre should encourage the candidate to follow the UKHSA's guidance.

The centre could also consider the advice in UKHSA's updated health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>

Evidencing candidates' eligibility for special consideration

The JCQ awarding bodies will be adapting Form 14 -JCQ/ME - *Self-certification for candidates who have missed an examination* to assist centres in dealing with candidates who are absent from an examination for an acceptable reason in line with the UKHSA guidance. Centres will expect parents/carers/guardians and candidates to complete the relevant sections of the form.

Centres can verify the candidate's circumstances, where provided in Form 14, to process an application for special consideration using the category 'absent candidate'.

There is **no requirement** for a candidate to complete a COVID-19 test to provide evidence of their absence from an examination.

Minimum requirements for a candidate to receive a grade through the special consideration process

Section 4.3, page 8 of this document outlines the minimum requirements for an adjustment to be made to the grade where a candidate is absent for an acceptable reason.

However, for the June 2022 examination series, due to the exceptional circumstances, the awarding bodies **will award a grade where eligible candidates have completed the assessment(s) for at least one whole component within the specification.**

N.B A candidate **cannot** receive a grade for A-level Biology, Chemistry, Geology or Physics by only completing the Practical Skills Endorsement.

Similarly, a candidate **cannot** receive a grade for GCSE English Language by only completing the Spoken Language Endorsement.

As in all previous standard examination series, a qualification award **will not** be made where none of the examinations/assessments within a specification have been completed.

Additional information

Where a centre suspects the authenticity of the details provided by a candidate within Form 14, they should investigate the matter as suspected candidate malpractice using the standard **JCQ policy and procedure**.

Candidates should be made aware that their results can be withdrawn, or they can be disqualified if they provide false information on eligibility for special consideration.

Examples of possible scenarios:

Example 1

An A-level candidate who is 18 is unwell and has a high temperature on the day of one of their A-level examinations.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations until he no longer has a high temperature and is well enough to attend his examinations.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their illness using Form 14.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) As the candidate's examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days he will be able to receive A-level grades based on the other components completed.

Example 2

An A-level candidate who is 19 is displaying symptoms of a respiratory infection, such as COVID-19, and has a high temperature or does not feel well enough to attend their examination.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations, until he no longer has a high temperature (if he had one) or no longer feels unwell.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their reason for absence using Form 14.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) As the candidate's A-level examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days in every subject, he will be able to receive A-level grades based on the other components completed.

Example 3

A candidate who is 16 has taken a COVID-19 test under the direction of a health professional or has chosen to take a COVID-19 test (against UKHSA guidance recommendations) and has a positive test result.

- a) The centre advises the candidate to stay at home and not attend their examinations for 3 days after the day she took the test.
- b) The centre asks the candidate to self-certify their reason for absence using Form 14.
- c) The centre does not require the candidate to provide proof of a test but could keep a record of the test, such as a photograph, as evidence if it is available.
- d) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed GCSE examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- e) As the candidate's GCSE examinations have been spaced by at least 10 days in every subject, she will be able to receive GCSE grades based on the other components completed.

Example 4

An A-level candidate who is 17 has a positive COVID-19 test result or is unwell and experiencing a high temperature but wishes to attend their examination.

- a) The centre refers the candidate to the UKHSA guidance. **In the case of a positive test result**, the candidate is advised to stay at home and not attend their A-level examinations for 3 days after the day the test was taken. **In the case of symptoms**, the candidate is advised to stay at home until she no longer has a high temperature.
- b) The centre reassures the candidate about their eligibility for special consideration. As the candidate's examinations are spaced by at least 10 days in every A-level subject, grades can be awarded on the other completed components.
- c) The centre submits an online application for special consideration for each of the missed A-level examinations to the relevant awarding bodies using the category 'absent candidate'.
- d) If the candidate still requests to attend the examination, the centre should follow the advice in UKHSA's updated health protection in education and childcare settings guidance.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-protection-in-schools-and-other-childcare-facilities>)