

### **Special Consideration Policy**

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 will not be applied where ongoing illness or injury forms part of normal working adjustments. (See also Exam Access Arrangements (EAA)). Only minor adjustments can be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardize the integrity of the qualification.

Where a candidate is ill on the day of the exam, or cannot attend due to unexpected close family bereavement, or similar such occurrence, the candidate must contact the ABPI Exams department on 020 7747 1436, so that an invigilator can be informed. Candidates who need to defer the taking of the exam for medical reasons or other extenuating circumstances must present a doctor's certificate or other such evidence<sup>1</sup> to the **ABPI Head of Education and Exam as soon as possible** after the relevant date of sickness or the date of the exam. It will be at the sole discretion of the ABPI acting through the ABPI Head of Education and Exam, or on appeal the ABPI Exam Appeal Board, whether to reschedule a candidate to sit the exam at a future date without payment of additional fees.

ABPI will only use your personal data on relevant lawful grounds as set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.

Should a candidate become unwell during the course of an exam sitting, the candidate must inform the **Lead Invigilator** of the exam immediately, who will assess the situation and facilitate appropriate support as necessary. With regard to onset of illness during an exam sitting, the candidate is entitled to put in a claim for Special Consideration, together with the required medical evidence. The claim will then be considered as per the terms of this policy.

Should there be any other adverse event, or something about which the candidate is not entirely satisfied, the candidate must inform the **Lead Invigilator** of the exam immediately.

Adverse circumstances beyond the candidate's control could include:

- serious disturbance during an examination;
- accidental events at the time of the assessment such as being given the wrong examination paper, failure of materials to arrive on time;
- failure by ABPI to implement previously approved EAA for that specific examination sitting.

For a non-exhaustive list of what will **NOT** be considered eligible for special consideration, see appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about how the ABPI processes personal information, please see the Exams Privacy Notice.

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The Invigilator has a general discretion to take such action during an examination as may be required in the consequence of unforeseen circumstances, including deciding whether it is appropriate for the candidate(s) to continue the assessment.

As soon as possible afterwards the Invigilator shall make a report to the **ABPI Head of Education & Exam** to include the circumstances and what action was taken. As a result, the **ABPI Head of Education and Exam**:

- Will treat all concerns seriously and will investigate as appropriate;
- Will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of the investigation;
- May wish to speak to the candidate to ascertain further information about the concerns raised, or to request written evidence;
- Will communicate with all affected parties to give an indication as to how ABPI proposes to deal with the concerns;
- If appropriate, may seek to resolve concerns at this stage, by declaring the sitting void and organizing a rescheduled exam sitting at a future date without payment of additional fees;
- Alternatively, will provide the investigation report, and all accompanying evidence, to the independent Chair of the Exam Governance Committee.

The report and all evidence provided to the Exam Governance Committee Chair, and where appropriate Exam Governance Committee members, will be anonymised to ensure all decisions are independent and fair.

The Exam Governance Committee Chair will consider the report and evidence provided and, may request further information from the Head of Education & Exam. The Exam Governance Committee Chair may reach a decision as to whether applying special consideration is appropriate or may choose to consult with the Exam Governance Committee prior to reaching a decision. The decision of the Exam Governance Committee Chair is final.

Special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of percentage marks to the affected unit within an exam sitting, rather than all units within an exam sitting. For example, where a very recent bereavement is being considered, the closeness of the bereavement, and the date of the examination in relation to the bereavement would be carefully considered before deciding if it is deemed appropriate to award a nominal special consideration for all units within an exam sitting.

The size of the allowance in all cases depends on the timing, nature and extent of the individual circumstances, with the final decision ensuring the overall integrity of the qualification assessment is not unduly affected. The maximum allowance given will be 5% of the overall mark for the unit concerned.

Special consideration is not normally applied in a cumulative fashion, but where it is, the allowance is capped at a total of 5%.

The Special Consideration policy does not apply in the case of exam answer sheets lost or damaged in the interval of time between the candidate sitting the exam, and the paper being marked. Should this happen, the ABPI Exam team will inform the candidate(s) as to what has happened, and what action the ABPI will take as a result.

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ABPI acting through employees and representatives will not enter into discussion with candidates or their line managers as to how much special consideration could or should be applied.

Where applying special consideration is deemed appropriate, it will follow the guidelines set out below, and 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;
- very recent death of a member of the immediate family;
- very serious and disruptive domestic crisis 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;
- severe injury arising from a car accident;
- very recent death of member of extended family;
- severe or permanent bodily injury occurring at, or close to, the time of the examination;
- serious domestic crisis at the time of the examination.

3% Serious problems such as:

- recent traumatic experience such as death of a close friend or distant relative;
- recent illness of a more serious nature;
- flare-up of severe chronic condition such as epilepsy, diabetes, severe asthmatic attack;
- physical assault trauma before an examination;
- recent domestic crisis;
- witnessing a distressing event on the day of the examination.

2% Problems resulting from:

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- recent viral illness;
- concussion;
- effects of pregnancy (not pregnancy per se);
- extreme distress on the day of an examination; (**not** exam related stress)

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;
- minor ailments;
- minor upset arising from administrative problems, such as wrong time allocated, in the event this was not identified in time, and compensated for by the Lead Invigilator during the exam sitting.

0% The application was reviewed but the addition of marks was deemed inappropriate. (Where the request fails to meet the criteria, it will be rejected.)

**Appendix 1: (Please note this is not an exhaustive list)**

**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;
- bereavement of a close family relative occurring more than one month before the assessment;
- domestic inconvenience, such as moving to a new house, lack of facilities;
- minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as a momentary disturbance or a mobile phone ringing;
- the consequences of taking alcohol or recreational drugs;
- the consequences of disobeying the centre's internal regulations;
- failing to attend at the right time and in the right exam room/venue;
- misreading the instructions of the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
- 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).