

Access arrangements: Special considerations

Policy and procedures

Contents

Access arrangements: Special considerations policy

Effective from:	September 2023
For the attention of:	Heads of Centre / ASDAN QA

Policy owner	Policy approver
Qualification Manager	Compliance Manager

Review history		
Date	Version	Reviewed by
July 2018	Draft created and approved	Head of Quality Assurance and Qualifications
October 2020	Version 2	Compliance Manager
October 2021	Version 2.1	Compliance Manager
January 2022	Version 3 – Covid 19 extraordinary assessment arrangements included	Compliance Manager
September 2022	Version 4 – removal of extraordinary arrangements	Senior Quality Assurance Manager
September 2023	Version 5 – effective from and next review dates updated to reflect policy review schedule	Qualification Manager
Next review: August 2025	To be reviewed by Qualification Manager and approved by Compliance Manager	

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1 Introduction

This version replaces all previous versions and it is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all staff involved in the provision of ASDAN qualifications including centre assessments familiarise themselves with this version of the document

As an approved awarding organisation, ASDAN has confirmed with the regulatory authorities that it has adopted the principles outlined in:

- General/Standard Conditions of Recognition
- The Vocational and technical qualifications contingency regulatory framework (VCRF)
- Equality Act 2010

This document defines the term Special Consideration and identifies the context of particular assessment requirements and the procedures for making applications. ASDAN provides application forms and additional guidance on permitted adjustments for centres.

2 Definition of special consideration

The term special consideration applies post-assessment, and may be applied for candidates who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of 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 their normal level of attainment in an assessment. It may not be considered at all if alternative assessment arrangements can be made.

Candidates cannot enter a plea for special considerations for assessment solely on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty, and must declare their needs prior to the assessment period. All necessary reasonable adjustments arrangements must have been implemented before the time of the assessment.

Special considerations are normally circumstances relating to the health and/or personal life of a candidate which are of a sufficiently serious and significant nature to result in them being unable to attend, complete or submit an assessment on time

It is important that centres assess the candidate/cohort after the assessment period has ended to determine if an application to ASDAN should be made.

They are also expected to be either:

- a) **unforeseeable**, in that the candidate could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned
- b) **unavoidable**, in that the candidate could have done nothing reasonably in their power to prevent or avoid such an event

If the assessment has been partially achieved, special consideration may be considered and will depend on their circumstances and should reflect the difficulty faced by the candidate or the reason for the special consideration request.

Special consideration should not give the candidate an unfair advantage. The candidate's result must reflect their achievement in the assessment and not necessarily their potential ability.

2 Definition of special consideration

2.1 Examples of special consideration

Candidates could be eligible for special consideration if they have been disadvantaged for example this could include:

- Illness of a family member or class which led to self-isolation for a prolonged period of time
- Stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed
- Extreme distress on the day of an assessment (not simply assessment related stress)

Or some other event outside of the candidate's control, which has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate their level of attainment in an assessment for example:

- Bereavement – death of close relative, friend or significant other (of a nature which, in a learning context, would have led to an absence)
- Serious short-term illness or temporary illness immediately before or during assessments
- Significant adverse personal or family circumstances
- Significant disruption of an assessment
- Severe adverse weather conditions
- A significant failure of due process by the centre
- Other significant exceptional factors for which there is evidence of stress caused anxiety

2 Definition of special consideration

2.2 ASDAN on-demand assessments

In the case of an on-demand assessment, where a candidate's performance is likely to be affected by circumstances beyond their control, the assessment should be rescheduled. However, if this is not possible, the centre should contact ASDAN as soon as possible.

If an on-demand assessment cannot be rescheduled and the candidate has completed all the other required components/units for the qualification, it may be possible to apply for special consideration. However, ASDAN will explore all options for the candidate to take the assessment first, before applying special consideration.

A candidate who is fully prepared and present for a scheduled assessment may be eligible for special consideration if:

- Performance in an assessment is affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate e.g. recent personal illness, accident, bereavement, serious disturbance during the assessment
- Alternative assessment arrangements which were agreed in advance of the assessment proved inappropriate or inadequate
- Part of an assessment has been missed due to circumstances beyond the control of the candidate
- There is a sufficient difference between the part of the assessment to which special consideration is applied and other parts of the qualification that have been achieved to infer that the candidate could have performed more successfully in the assessment.

A candidate will not be eligible for special consideration if:

- No evidence is supplied by the centre that the candidate has been affected at the time of the assessment by a particular condition
- Any part of the assessment is missed due to personal arrangements including holidays or unauthorised absence
- Preparation for an assessment is affected by difficulties during the course, for example, disturbances through building work, lack of proper facilities, changes in or shortages of staff, or industrial disputes.

Where an assessment requires a criterion or standard to be met fully, it may not be possible to apply special consideration. It may be more appropriate to offer the candidate the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date. In all cases, where applicable, unit certification is available.

2 Definition of special consideration

2.3 Partially completed internal assessments

Should candidates only be able to complete some of the tasks within an assessment due to disruption or adverse circumstances, centres should check whether any permissible adaptations would be appropriate or useful to allow the candidate(s) to complete the assessment in the first instance.

When and how the assessments were completed should be captured to support assessment and subsequent external quality assurance by ASDAN.

All candidates, regardless of their special consideration must still meet the minimum requirement of the qualification (award or certificate).

Please remember, special consideration is not available where:

- There is another assessment opportunity available to the candidate within the academic year
- The candidate has already taken and passed the assessment
- The candidate has not completed all the other required components/units for the qualification

Evidence of incomplete assessments could include:

- Partially completed assessments
- Other completed comparable assessments
- Practice or mock assessments
- Teacher observations
- Internal assessor notes or decisions

Centres must keep clear records of the assessments their candidates have completed, along with any mock or formative assessments. Where possible, these should be stored electronically. These records will support the special consideration process.

If the candidate or cohort have been unable to complete a planned assessment, please contact ASDAN. There may be other instances where centres may feel it appropriate to request special consideration. In all cases, centres are required to put that request in writing to compliance@asdan.org.uk. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis.

ASDAN will communicate the process for centres to submit supporting evidence as part of these special consideration applications.

3 Procedure for applying for special consideration

Applications for special consideration must be made in writing by the head of centre or examinations officer, per candidate/cohort, per assessment and sent to ASDAN. Details of the circumstances supporting the application must be supplied.

No applications will be accepted if submitted directly by candidates, parents or employers.

- 1 The need for special consideration is identified within a centre. Following internal consideration a decision is made that an application should be made to ASDAN.
- 2 Applications are made in writing to compliance@asdan.org.uk using copies of the forms provided on the ASDAN website: asdan.org.uk/policies-regulations-and-centre-guidance, together with a list of supporting evidence. Applications must be sent as early as possible following the event, and at the latest four weeks prior to the external moderation¹.
- 3 Applications will not be accepted after the publication of results. It is important to process applications before the issue of results, so it may not be possible to respond individually to each request.
- 4 Once received by ASDAN details are recorded on a pro forma and, if necessary, acknowledgement sent within five working days.
- 5 If necessary, the application is discussed with the Compliance Manager and appropriate other senior staff (eg Principal Moderators). Centres and other relevant persons are informed of the decision in writing within two weeks of the request. All information is recorded on pro forma.
- 6 If the decision is not straightforward and cannot be made without further consultation, advice is sought from other bodies (eg Ofqual or other regulatory bodies). In the event of continued consultation acknowledgement is sent to relevant parties. Centres are informed of final decisions in writing as soon as possible.
- 7 ASDAN will provide reports on data and information on special consideration to the regulatory bodies on request.

1 Please do not apply for Special Considerations during the external moderation as this should have been identified prior to the results being uploaded to the ASDAN website and an application should have been sent at the latest four weeks prior to moderation.

4 Associated policies and procedures

Document name	Responsible person
Centre approval: Guidance for ASDAN qualifications	Compliance Officer
Appeals and Enquiries About Results Policy	Senior Quality Assurance Manager
EPQ Post Results Review and Appeals Policy	Senior Quality Assurance Manager
Assess Arrangements: Reasonable Adjustments	Compliance Manager
Document Retention Policy	Compliance Manager
Qualification Development Policy	Qualification Manager
Validity and Reliability Policy	Qualification Manager





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