

November 2021



EXAMINATIONS HANDBOOK

Standard Operating Procedure 06

Mitigating Circumstances (Special Considerations)

Amendments and date of issue

Amendments to this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) can be authorised only by the Chair of the Qualifications Board in consultation with that Board and the Examinations Committee.

This issue is 2020 version 3 and is dated November 2021.

Register of amendments

Version	Brief description of Amendment	Amendment	Date approved
2020.1	New handbook		23/11/2020
2020.2	Changes to the deadline by which special consideration must be submitted and to the content of a special consideration application		22/01/21
2020.3	Special Consideration: previous applications	p.2, paragraph 5	29/11/2021

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Mitigating circumstances

1. It is the policy of the Institute to allow Candidates in certain circumstances to receive special consideration due to personal extenuating circumstances. This would be for exceptional, short term events which are outside a Candidate's control and have a substantial negative impact upon their ability to prepare for or take (sit) a scheduled written or practical examination.

2. Candidates must apply for special consideration as soon as they become aware of a potential issue, and at least 21 days before the examination date.

3. If circumstances arise after the 21-day limit, which are unforeseen and unpreventable, a late application for special consideration may be submitted, no later than 14 days after the examination in question. An example might be a physical accident on the day of the examination. A late application for special consideration must be supported by the Course Director.

4. All applications for special consideration must be made in writing. The Candidate should send the written application to the Course Director, or, exceptionally, the Chief Examiner, who will forward it promptly, with their comments, if relevant, to the Examinations Officer. The Examinations Officer will promptly forward applications for special consideration to the Qualifications Board for decision. The Qualifications Board, in making its decision, will take into account whether the application complies with Paragraph 5.

5. The written application must:

- Specify the date(s) and title(s) of the examination(s) in respect of which special consideration is sought;
- Explain the circumstances as a result of which special consideration is sought, and why or how they have a substantial negative impact on the candidate's ability to prepare for or take the examination(s) in question;
- State when these circumstances arose, and, if different, when it was appreciated that they would have this negative effect;
- If the application is later than the times specified in paragraph 2 or is a late application under paragraph 3, the reasons why the application is late must be explained;
- If the special consideration sought is other than permitting the Candidate to miss the examination in question, the application needs to describe such special consideration and explain why it is appropriate and in accordance with para 6 below;
- If the Candidate has previously applied for special consideration in the current course, details must be provided, together with a copy of the previous application(s).

The application should be accompanied by appropriate and independent medical or other evidence.

The application should identify the Candidate only by candidate number and references to the candidate's name in the supporting evidence should be redacted.

6. Any special consideration:

- Must treat Candidates fairly.
- Must not invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the specification for the relevant qualification.
- Must require Candidate to fully meet the assessment requirements.

- Must not give any of the Candidates an unfair advantage compared to Candidates for whom special considerations are not being made.
- Must maintain the relevance, reliability, and comparability of the assessment.

7. Candidates who miss one or more examination(s) as a result of an illness or an accident must notify the Institute as a matter of urgency with immediate effect, and must produce supporting documentation, for example medical evidence, as soon as possible and no later than 14 days after the first examination missed.

8. Should special consideration be granted Candidates must normally wait to re-sit examinations at the next available opportunity. In these circumstances, the examination missed will not count as one of the Candidates' consecutive attempts at that examination.

NOTE: It is a ground of appeal (see SOP 7) that: “the appellant believed that their performance in the examination had been materially impaired by ill health or other circumstances which the appellant had been unable, for valid reasons, to divulge to the Examinations Officer or to an Examiner on the day of the examination which could be a Mitigating Circumstance.”