

# External Special Considerations Policy



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## VERSION CONTROL

Version number	Summary of change	Date changed
V1	Policy creation	Nov 2024
V2	Separation of policy from Reasonable adjustments and Special considerations to individual policies, new policy template, review and update to process.	June 2025

## INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out CTQ's approach to supporting learners who experience unexpected, temporary circumstances that affect their performance during or immediately before an assessment. CTQ is committed to ensuring fair and consistent treatment of learners while maintaining the integrity and validity of our qualifications.

Special consideration is a post-assessment adjustment to the result or outcome, granted in exceptional cases where a learner has been disadvantaged by temporary illness, injury, or other uncontrollable events. It does not remove the need for learners to meet the assessment criteria but recognises that performance may have been affected.

This policy is aligned with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and incorporates relevant guidance from the *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Joint Statement (V1, August 2021)*<sup>1</sup>, particularly in relation to first aid qualifications. It also reflects Ofqual General Conditions, ensuring regulatory compliance across all qualifications.

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been developed collaboratively with the following organisations: • The First Aid Quality Partnership • The First Aid Awarding Organisation Forum • The Resuscitation Council UK

## SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- All qualifications offered by CTQ
- All learners undertaking CTQ qualifications who may be affected by short-term, unforeseen circumstances
- All CTQ-approved centres and their staff involved in the delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of qualifications
- CTQ staff responsible for policy implementation, decision-making, and quality assurance

This policy includes:

- Definitions and procedures for requesting special consideration
- Responsibilities of centres and CTQ in processing applications
- Criteria for approving or rejecting requests
- Timescales and documentation requirements
- Escalation and appeals procedures

This policy supports:

- Learners experiencing temporary illness, injury, trauma, or other short-term adverse circumstances close to the time of assessment

All centres must ensure this policy is accessible to staff and learners and that it is applied appropriately when a learner's performance may have been affected by unforeseen events.

## ACTIVITY

### SPECIAL CONSIDERATION: ELIGIBILITY

Special consideration refers to post-assessment adjustments made when a learner's performance is affected by temporary, unforeseen circumstances that occur immediately before or during an assessment, and where reasonable adjustments could not be made in advance.

To be eligible, a learner must have:

- Attended the assessment and been prepared to complete it
- Been affected by illness, injury, trauma, or other significant disruption beyond their control
- Missed part of the assessment or had their performance demonstrably impacted

Examples include:

- Bereavement or serious personal incident shortly before the assessment
- Sudden illness or accident
- Significant disruption during the assessment
- Failure to implement agreed reasonable adjustments

Special consideration cannot be used to give a learner an unfair advantage or estimate what they might have achieved under different circumstances. Adjustments must be fair, proportionate, and reflect the learner's actual achievement.

In most cases, this may result in a small mark adjustment, or an opportunity to re-sit the assessment.

**Important:** In Licence to Practise qualifications (e.g. first aid), special consideration may not be valid if practical demonstration is required for certification. Where needed, learners should be offered a resit instead.

## PROCESS

1. Issue occurs – A learner is affected by illness, trauma, disruption, or another unexpected event immediately before or during their assessment.
2. Centre responds – The centre supports the learner, gathers relevant information, and determines whether special consideration is appropriate.
3. Application is submitted – The centre completes the Special Consideration Application Form and submits it to CTQ within **5 working days** of the assessment, including relevant evidence (e.g. medical notes, incident logs, witness accounts).
4. CTQ reviews – CTQ acknowledges receipt within **2 working days**, reviews the application within **10 working days** of receiving full information, and assesses the impact on assessment performance.
5. Outcome is issued – If approved, CTQ will apply a proportionate adjustment (e.g. mark amendment, reschedule, or extension) based on qualification type and severity. The decision is shared with the centre and, where required, the EQA.

Centres must retain all related documentation securely for internal audit and external quality assurance purposes.

As required by Conditions G7.1, G7.2 and G8.1, CTQ ensures that special consideration is only applied where a learner's performance has been genuinely affected, and that any resulting adjustments uphold the validity, authenticity, and security of the assessment.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following RACI matrix outlines the roles and responsibilities for key activities within this policy, ensuring clarity on who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed.

Activity	Responsible	Accountable	Consulted	Informed
<b>Special considerations</b>				
Support learners impacted by illness, trauma, or disruption	Centre staff	Head of Centre	Learner	CTQ
Complete and submit Special Consideration Application Form	Centre staff	Head of Centre	Learner	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations
Review supporting evidence	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	Specialist advisors (as needed)	-
Decide on eligibility and any action (e.g. resit, extension, mark adjustment)	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	CTQ Leadership Team	-	Centre, Learner, EQA
Communicate decision to centre	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	-	Centre, Learner, EQA
Log and review patterns in requests for internal QA	CTQ Leadership Team	CTQ Responsible Officer	EQA	Regulatory authorities
Maintain documentation for audit and quality assurance	Centre staff	Head of Centre	-	CTQ, EQA
Escalate disputed or urgent cases	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	Responsible Officer	CTQ Leadership Team	Centre, Learner
Manage formal appeals if submitted	Centre (initiates)	CTQ Responsible Officer	CTQ Head of Quality and Operations	Learner, Regulator

## ESCALATION AND REPORTING

CTQ recognises that decisions around special consideration can carry significant implications for learners and centres.

### ESCALATION

If a centre disagrees with a decision made by CTQ relating to special consideration, they are encouraged to raise the matter initially with the CTQ Head of Quality and Operations. Where a satisfactory resolution is not reached, the centre may submit a formal appeal in line with CTQ's Enquiries and Appeals Policy. Appeals will be investigated independently and outcomes will be shared with the centre, learner (where appropriate), and any involved staff.

Escalation may also be necessary in other scenarios, including:

- Delays in CTQ decision-making beyond published timescales.
- Urgent concerns involving learner safety, assessment integrity, or regulatory compliance.
- Patterns of inconsistent application of policy identified by External Quality Assurers (EQAs) or CTQ staff.

Where a serious risk to regulatory compliance is identified, CTQ will follow its formal reporting procedures, including notifying the appropriate regulator where required. Safeguarding or health and safety concerns will be prioritised and escalated for immediate review and action.

### REPORTING

All special consideration requests received by CTQ are logged systematically and reviewed regularly to identify recurring themes, risks to assessment integrity, and opportunities for continuous improvement. In line with Condition D3.2, we evaluate whether these requests highlight systemic issues, process gaps, or potential adverse effects.

Where appropriate, outcomes may lead to updates in our assessment practices, policies, procedures, or staff training. We are committed to taking proportionate and preventative actions to reduce the likelihood of recurrence and maintain qualification integrity.

Summary data is reported to the Senior Leadership Team and reviewed alongside other quality assurance indicators. Insights from these requests inform internal review processes and strategic planning. Serious or recurring issues may be escalated to the Board for governance oversight.



## POLICY REVIEW

This policy is subject to a three-year review cycle, or earlier if feedback or concerns are raised with CTQ, to ensure it remains fit for purpose and its processes and outcomes are deliverable.

It will also be reviewed as part of CTQ's continuous improvement monitoring through its annual self-assessment arrangements.

## REGULATORY CONDITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

CTQ is committed to meeting the requirements set out by Ofqual's Conditions of Recognition.

CTQ will ensure:

- Policies and procedures align with regulatory conditions.
- All staff understand their obligations in relation to compliance.
- A robust system is in place to identify, manage, and mitigate risks to regulatory compliance.

The table below lists the conditions to which this policy applies.

Condition reference							
D3.2	G7.1	G7.2	G8.1	H5.3	H5.4	11.1	