

## The De Montfort School

### Mitigating circumstances (special consideration): Protocols for 2020/21 examination series

The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding organisations for qualifications will not apply this summer. As the range of evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student according to coverage of the specification, centres have been advised to select work completed by a student where they were unaffected by adverse circumstances.

Where this is not possible and a temporary illness, a temporary injury or some other event outside of the student's control may have affected their performance in assessments which will be used to determine a grade, teachers should take this into account and document how they have done so. Mitigating circumstances only apply to an unexpected or a sudden event that may have had an adverse effect on a particular assessment.

Centres must be satisfied that the issue or event has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a student's ability to demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.

Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching and learning or missing an assessment due to illness. This can be addressed through the flexibility of the range of evidence centres may use to determine students' grades, or can be addressed using additional assessments or evidence. Similarly, anxiety about taking assessments and increased stress levels would not be classed a mitigating circumstance.

Examples of mitigating circumstances which may be considered by schools are included in the guide [JCO – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020](#). This guide suggests the following incidents may be a grounds for mitigating circumstances:

- temporary illness or accident/injury **at the time of the assessment**;
- bereavement **at the time of the assessment** (where whole groups are affected, normally only those most closely involved will be eligible);
- domestic crisis arising **at the time of the assessment**;
- serious disturbance **during an examination**, particularly where recorded material is being used;
- accidental events **at the time of the assessment** such as being given the wrong examination paper, being given a defective examination paper or CD, failure of practical equipment, failure of materials to arrive on time;
- participation in **sporting events, training camps or other events at an international level at the time of the assessment, e.g. representing their country at an international level in chess or football**;
- failure by the centre to implement **previously approved access arrangements for that specific examination series**.

This guide also provides a list of incidences that would not be grounds for a mitigating circumstances request and this may prove a useful reference point when deciding whether to apply for special consideration.

For this assessment period, students are encouraged to raise any mitigating circumstances with their teaching centre. The guidance states that:

“Students must be reminded to raise any mitigating circumstances which warrant special consideration. It is important that students raise these issues as soon as possible, ideally at the time of the assessment and prior to the submission of the teacher assessed grade.”

We have in place the following protocols that all schools in The Four Stones Multi Academy Trust (MAT) will follow:

- If a parent/carer (or student) believes their son/daughter has been individually affected by particular circumstances that have had a significantly negative impact on their performance in any assessment that will contribute towards their final grade, they should notify the school by completing the 'Mitigating Circumstances' form via this link [Special Consideration Application](#).
- The school will require information explaining why it is felt there are mitigating circumstances and an overview of which assessments this may have affected and how.

- Where appropriate, supporting evidence should also be requested and supplied – for example a doctor’s note.
- As per the school’s centre policy, to ensure consistency in the application of special consideration, all schools within the MAT will ensure all teachers have read and understood the document: [JCQ – A guide to the special consideration process, with effect from 1 September 2020.](#)
- During the w/b 7<sup>th</sup> June we will convene an independent panel from one of our partner schools to consider the requests. This panel will consist of an associate headteacher, a SENCo and a SEND Governor.
- The panel will receive a redacted form (no name, reference to gender or initial decision should be on the form). The document should also be password protected.
- The associate headteacher will communicate in writing the decision(s) of the panel to the associate headteacher of the school where the request has been made.
- The decision will be held on the student’s file with all the evidence used to award the centre assessed grade (which will be kept in a lockable cabinet where examination papers would ordinarily be held) and will be made available should the file be requested by Ofqual or an exam board.