

ABPI Exam Policy

Special Consideration Policy

This policy is reviewed annually to ensure compliance with current regulations

Approved/reviewed by	
ABPI Director of Examinations March 2022	
Date of next review	March 2023

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 should reschedule the online booking through the 'My Assessments' page in the Questionmark portal. A cancelled exam appointment does not count as an attempt. There is no penalty for rescheduling, and a rescheduled appointment does not count as an attempt. The ABPI Examinations Team cannot reschedule an exam sitting on behalf of the Candidate.

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 **Proctor** of the exam immediately. With regard to onset of illness during an exam sitting, the candidate is entitled to put in a claim for Special Consideration, together with a doctor's certificate or other such written evidence¹. The claim will then be considered as per the terms of this policy.

The Rules of Conduct during the online proctored Examination include: *No talking is permitted, except to communicate with the proctor **if necessary**.* Consequently, where there is an extreme adverse event, other than illness, the candidate can inform the **Proctor** of the exam immediately.

Note, the webcam and screen of the candidate's computer for all proctored exams are recorded, with the recording kept for 30 days.

Adverse circumstances beyond the candidate's control could include:

- serious disturbance during an examination (this would not include momentary interruption of the exam by another person entering the room, as this is already prohibited activity for online exams.

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

Candidates must ensure the testing environment is suitable and not subject to interruption by people or pets);

- 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.

In the event of a candidate needing to leave the online exam due to a genuine emergency evacuation, the candidate **MUST** take all necessary measures to protect their own safety and the safety of others. Once safe to do so, the candidate should use email or telephone to get advice on possible next steps from the ABPI Examinations Team during office hours.

Depending on the duration of the evacuation, the Proctor may still be online when the candidate returns to the computer station, and if so, can communicate with the Proctor who may be able to decide whether it is appropriate for the candidate to continue the assessment. Where a genuine emergency evacuation has occurred during a live online assessment, irrespective of whether the assessment was resumed, the candidate should inform the ABPI Examinations Team as soon as possible after the event. An emergency evacuation is not necessarily grounds for applying special consideration.

In response to any application for Special Consideration, the **ABPI Director of Examinations:**

- Will treat all applications seriously and will investigate as appropriate;
- Will carry out an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation;
- May wish to speak to the candidate to ascertain further information, or to request written evidence;

- If appropriate, may seek to resolve concerns at this stage, by declaring the exam attempt void and organizing a rescheduled exam attempt at a future date without payment of additional fees;
- Alternatively, and most usually, 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 ABPI Director of Examinations. 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 first affected unit exam where a number of units are taken in close succession, rather than all units within a short period of time. 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 an exam unit.

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 answers failing to save or be submitted correctly.

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 vehicle 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:

- 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;
- stress or anxiety for which medication has been prescribed;
- minor ailments.;

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 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;
- misreading the exam instructions or answering the wrong questions;
- 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).