**Hinchingbrooke TAGs**

**Mitigating Circumstances Process**

**Key Principles:**

* The usual process of centres submitting special consideration applications to awarding bodies will not apply this summer. This is partly because the evidence is flexible and can be tailored to an individual student;
* Instances of special consideration should be limited as a result;
* Special consideration cannot be applied due to lost teaching – students should only be assessed on what they have been taught;
* Students should be reminded to raise any mitigating circumstances;
* Mitigating circumstances should be raised BEFORE the submission of grades;
* Where students experience adverse circumstances at the time of an assessment we should apply the process written down in ‘A guide to the special consideration process’ published by JCQ;
* Where the school believes mitigating circumstances have indeed been experienced then it should be recorded;
* Where possible an alternative piece of work should be selected;
* It should be recorded why a different piece of work has been selected;
* The student should be informed that a different piece of work has been used and what this piece of work is;
* If there is no alternative piece of work available, then the holistic judgement should be based on the available evidence;
* The rationale for assigning the grade should be noted;

**A guide to the special consideration process’ JCQ (1 September 2020)**

* Should be applied where a student has been affected by a potentially wide range of difficulties, emotional or physical, which may have influenced their performance;
* Where long term circumstances have prevented a student from reaching the competence standards, it may not be possible to make an adjustment;
* Special consideration **can** be applied in the following situations:
* Temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the assessment;
* Bereavement at the time of the assessment (close relative);
* Domestic crisis at the time of the assessment;
* Serious disturbances during the assessment;
* Accidental events in the assessment such as being given the wrong paper, being given a defective assessment 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;
* Failure of the centre to implement previously approved access arrangements at the time of the assessments;
* Where a student will **not** be eligible for special consideration:
  + Long term illness or other difficulties during the course affecting revision time (unless they manifest themselves at the time of the assessment);
  + Bereavement occurring more than 6 months before the assessment (unless there is an anniversary and there are ongoing implications;
  + Domestic inconvenience such as moving house, lack of facilities, taking holidays at the time of the assessment;
  + Minor disturbance in the assessment caused by another student such as bad behaviour or a mobile phone ringing;
  + The consequences of committing a crime, where formally charged or found guilty;
  + The consequences of taking recreational drugs or alcohol;
  + The consequences of disobeying the centres regulations;
  + The failure of the centre to prepare students properly for the examination;
  + Quality of teaching, staff shortages, building work or lack of facilities;
  + Misreading the timetable and failing to attend the assessment;
  + Misreading the instructions on the question paper and answering the wrong questions;
  + Making personal arrangements which conflict with the assessment timetable;
  + Submitting no coursework/NEA;
  + Missing all assessments;
  + Failure to cover the course due to joining the class part way through;
  + A disability/learning disability unless illness affects the student at the time of the assessment;
  + Failure of the centre to process access arrangements by the published deadline.
* The above guidelines will be used to decide on mitigating circumstances for the summer 2021 series;
* As the grades are based on matching the body of evidence to a descriptor, professional judgement must be used to decide whether a borderline student should attain the higher of the two grades if mitigating circumstances have occurred.

**The Hinchingbrooke Process:**

1. A detailed video about mitigating circumstances, the body of evidence and the application form should be shared with parents and students with a deadline for informing the school
2. A panel will be convened to look at the application and decide what, if any further action should be taken.
3. Where mitigating circumstances are thought to have affected a students’ performance

and meet the JCQ threshold:

* In the first instance departments should be required to see if they have an alternative piece of evidence. It should be recorded by the department why the student has an alternative piece of evidence (paperwork from the panel);
* Where an alternative piece of evidence cannot be found the department needs to consider if they have enough evidence to award a grade. If they do then the panel paperwork should be retained to explain why there is less evidence for this student than for others in the cohort;
* Where there is not enough evidence to award a grade the panel then needs to consider which category the mitigating circumstances falls in, decide if this means the student should be matched to a higher grade category based on what they know of the student – this will only be relevant in cases where the student is a borderline case.

1. Students and parents should NOT be informed of the decision – as would be the case in a ‘normal’ year.