



# *Special Consideration policy*

**You should read and understand this document before sitting any exam.**

## **What is special consideration?**

Special consideration is for students that experience extenuating circumstances during an exam. If you make a successful application for special consideration, and you fail the exam, then ICAEW may grant you special consideration. If you pass the exam, special consideration will not apply.

Special consideration falls under two categories:

1. Personal circumstances for a candidate; and
2. Issues arising from the exam environment itself.

Usually, a successful application for special consideration will mean your exam is voided. You would not receive a mark for the exam, it would not count as an attempt, and you would not be eligible to apply for marks feedback.

## **I have personal circumstances which might affect my exam: what should I do?**

Personal circumstances might include illness, bereavement, or other circumstances which are specific to you and not to the exam.

Usually you will need to defer your exam. By attending the exam, you will be presumed to be fit to take the exam and able to fully demonstrate your knowledge and skills. You may wish to review ICAEW's exam withdrawal policy.

Where circumstances occur before the exam application deadline, you might be eligible for access arrangements. Make sure you read the relevant guidance available on our website.

ICAEW will only accept special consideration applications relating to personal circumstances where all of the below apply. There are also specific exclusions at the end of this document.

- The issue was significant, and would have a clear impact on your exam mark
- Exam withdrawal was not an option
- The circumstances are independently verified with appropriate evidence (see below)
- The circumstances were not related to travel or lateness
- You took reasonable mitigating action to prevent any negative impact
- You could not have applied for access arrangements, or were not eligible for access arrangements

## **There is an issue with the exam environment itself: what should I do?**

You should inform the invigilator; many problems can be solved at the exam venue. If you have advised the invigilator, or they were already aware of the issue, then you need to consider whether the circumstances had a clear and substantial impact on your exam performance. You **must** submit an application for special consideration if you want us to consider your circumstances, even if the invigilator says they will report it.

ICAEW will only accept special consideration applications relating to exam environment issues where all of the below apply. There are also specific exclusions at the end of this document.

- The issue was significant, and would have a clear impact on your exam mark.

- You took reasonable mitigating action to prevent any negative impact.
- The invigilator was unable to resolve the issue(s).
- The invigilator is able to verify the details of your application.
- Additional time was not, or could not be granted to compensate for the situation.

## Applying for special consideration

### Stage 1

If you wish to apply, you must submit an online application by visiting <https://my.icaew.com/examsonline> and clicking on 'Apply for special consideration'. You can also attach any supporting evidence along with your application. You must do this within 10 days of the exam session.

We will send you an email to confirm that we have received your application. We will then confirm if you have met the basic criteria described in this guidance document within 19 days of your exam.

### Stage 2

If your application has met the basic criteria, your application will be put forward to the Assessment Review Panel (stage 4).

If you have not met the basic criteria we will tell you why. We will refer to one or more of the bullet points in this document and offer you the opportunity to request a review (stage 3).

### Stage 3

You should only request a review if you can either show that your original application does meet the application criteria or you can provide further evidence. You will have seven days to make a review request. We will send you an email to confirm that we have received your review request.

### Stage 4

If you passed the exam, special consideration does not apply to you and your application will be taken no further.

If you failed the exam your application will be assessed by the Assessment Review Panel and a recommendation put forward to the Assessment Committee.

### Stage 5

If you are granted special consideration for **personal circumstances**, then the Assessment Committee will void your exam mark. If you are granted special consideration for **exam environment issues**, then the Assessment Committee will consider whether to void your exam mark, or in exceptional circumstances they may make an adjustment to the mark, and award a void if the mark remains a fail.

A void mark means that you will not receive a mark for the exam, it will not count as an attempt, and you will not be eligible to apply for marks feedback.

If the Assessment Committee does not grant you special consideration, you will receive your result as normal on results day.

**The Assessment Committee's decision is final. You cannot appeal against a decision after results have been issued.**

## Acceptable evidence

Many special consideration applications will need to be supported by independent evidence. This can be attached to the online application. Any evidence you submit must be from an appropriate source, and must be verifiable. Medical evidence must be issued within two days of the exam date and must be sufficiently detailed to demonstrate the impact on your exam performance. It's up to you to supply appropriate evidence. We won't consider evidence from friends or relatives nor will we contact third parties on your behalf. You should always consult a fully qualified doctor if you require medical evidence.

Where relevant, we will also consider the statements of ICAEW invigilators in the context of your application and corresponding evidence.

## Specific exclusions

In addition to the requirements above, for avoidance of doubt we will not accept applications:

- supported by statutory sick notes, which do not give sufficient detail;
- supported by evidence from family or friends;
- relating to minor illness such as colds or headaches;
- relating to any incident prior to the exam day;
- relating to any incident on the exam day where you chose to attend in an unfit state;
- for physical impairments supported by evidence from a doctor who has not examined you in person;
- relating to minor disturbances such as mobile phones ringing, or keyboard noise in computerised exams;
- relating to invigilator actions necessary for the administration of the exam;
- relating to travel or lateness;
- relating to issues of which you were aware and may have been eligible for access arrangements;
- where the computer equipment meets the minimum specification;
- which require ICAEW to contact parties on your behalf (we will only review what you provide); or
- which are late or incomplete because criteria in this document have not been met.

This list is not exhaustive and only represents common circumstances which are not eligible for special consideration.

Issues which fall under the Equality Act 2010 will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the Assessment Committee will adjust the special consideration criteria if this is required by the Act.