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## **Special Considerations Policy**

This policy aims to establish how STC Higher Education and NCC Education assist candidates who need additional support during the examinations (pre-assessment special considerations) or face extenuating circumstances which require post-assessment special considerations.

STC Policy Document - OEP Last updated July 2019



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Policy Statement

These guidance notes are designed to assist candidates who study at STC Higher Education<sup>1</sup>, both for NCC Education<sup>2</sup> qualifications or any other course. It aims to support those who require additional support during the examinations (pre-assessment special considerations) or whose performance is affected by extenuating circumstances (post-assessment special considerations) such as illness during, or immediately prior to the examination. Most of this policy is therefore inspired by NCC special considerations policy, although it applies to all courses being ministered at STC.

NCC plays a special role since it gives confirmation of the pre and post assessment special considerations that are allowed to the students registered for an NCC qualification. For those qualifications, STC cannot allow any special consideration if not approved by NCC.

### 1.2 Definitions

**Pre-assessment special considerations**, which are approved before an examination or assessment, are intended to allow attainment to be demonstrated; for example the production of a modified paper for a candidate with a visual impairment, whose need has previously been established. Where attainment cannot be demonstrated, even with special considerations, then a pass cannot be awarded as this would compromise the standards of the award. No candidate who cannot demonstrate the required learning outcomes will be awarded a pass by the operation of special considerations policies and procedures. These are also known as reasonable adjustments.

**Post-assessment special considerations**, which may be given following an examination or assessment, are intended to ensure that a candidate with a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time the assessment is conducted is given some recognition of the difficulty he/she has faced. These are also known as extenuating circumstances.

Clearly, any post-assessment special considerations granted cannot take away the difficulty the candidate has faced and can only be a relatively minor adjustment to ensure that the integrity of the standard is not compromised, where sufficient work has been submitted to allow an accurate assessment of attainment.

## 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

### 2.1 STC and NCC responsibilities

STC has the responsibility to ensure that all candidates have equal opportunities to reach their full potential. In some instances candidates may require adjustments to the assessment process to give them an equal opportunity. In making such adjustments, both STC and NCC must be satisfied that over-compensation does not occur which gives a candidate who has an adjusted assessment process an unfair advantage over other candidates.

STC is responsible for liaising directly with NCC on behalf of the candidate.

All pre-assessment special considerations must be determined (and, where applicable, approved by NCC) in advance of the assessment date.

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<sup>1</sup> From now onwards referred as STC

<sup>2</sup> From now onwards referred as NCC

## 2.2 Candidate's Responsibility

Candidates have a responsibility to inform STC at the beginning of the scholastic year or course, while registering, of their additional needs to enable adequate adjustments to be made to the assessment process. This will assure that requests are submitted not less than 12 weeks prior to the examination, whenever possible. For that purpose that candidate shall fill in the form on page 10 and handle it to STC.

## 3. PRE-ASSESSMENT SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: POLICY AND PROCEDURES

These apply where the student has a known condition that requires special arrangements for their assessment.

### 3.1 Examples of Disabilities, Effects and Adjustments

Disability type	Example of effect	Typical adjustment
Communication and Interaction	Written communications difficulties, autism	Extra time, scribe, word processor
Cognition and Learning	Learning difficulty, dyspraxia, dyslexia	Extra time, reader, scribe
Sensory and Physical Needs	Restricted language/vocabulary, unsighted, colour blindness	Modified paper (congenital deafness), Braille paper, large print, coloured paper, extra time
Behavioural, Emotional and Social Needs	Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), Asperger's syndrome, Tourette's syndrome	Prompter, rest breaks, alternative venue

Candidates are required to produce written evidence in order to support their claim. The written evidence has to be issued by a relevant professional to that condition. Longstanding conditions (Dyslexia, OCD, Asperger's syndrome and so forth) are required to produce written evidence from a qualified psychologist or doctor to support their claim and to submit evidence with their request to STC Higher Education. These reports cannot be older than 2 years.

For NCC qualifications, STC will then provide NCC with a brief report on the circumstances, the evidence supporting the request and the candidate details.

### 3.2 Adjustments Available

Adjustment	Example	Comments
Extra time <sup>3</sup>	Up to 25% for eligible candidates at the Centre's discretion	More than 25% - Centre to apply to NCC stating reasons

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<sup>3</sup> Note: rest periods are not counted as extra time

Reader	For example, temporary visual impairment, where Braille/large print are not appropriate	<p>The reader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ must read accurately</li> <li>▪ must only read the rubrics and questions but not explain or clarify</li> <li>▪ must repeat instructions given on the question paper only when specifically requested to do so by the candidate</li> <li>▪ must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to the disqualification of the candidate</li> <li>▪ must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which questions should be answered</li> <li>▪ may enable a visually impaired candidate to identify diagrams, graphs and tables but must not give factual information nor offer any suggestions, other than that information which would be available on the paper for sighted candidates</li> <li>▪ may read back, for a visually impaired candidate, what has been written in the answer</li> <li>▪ may, if requested, give a visually impaired candidate the spelling of a word which appears on the paper but otherwise spellings must not be given</li> <li>▪ must not be related to the candidate or in any other way connected to the candidate or his/her family.</li> </ul>
Scribe <sup>4</sup>	Where a candidate is unable to write or word-process their answers, and instead needs to dictate them. For example, due to physical injury to hands, severe cerebral palsy and so forth.	<p>The scribe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ must not give factual help to the candidate or indicate when the answer is complete</li> <li>▪ must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which questions should be answered</li> <li>▪ must write down or word process accurately what the candidate has said, except in an examination requiring word processing, in which case, a scribe will not be permitted</li> <li>▪ must draw or add to maps, diagrams and graphs strictly in accordance with the candidate's instructions</li> <li>▪ must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to the disqualification of the candidate.</li> </ul>
Word processor	Where candidate cannot produce legible handwriting for certified reasons, or has severe dyslexia resulting in many crossings-out, omissions and so forth.	

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<sup>4</sup> Voice recognition software is classified as a form of scribe. A scribe may also act as reader if appropriate.

Transcript	Where script is illegible, for example dyslexia sufferer who writes phonetically	Original plus transcript sent for marking
Prompter <sup>5</sup>	Where candidate has no sense of time, suffers from obsessive compulsive disorder and so forth.	The prompter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ must not speak to the candidate, give factual help or offer any suggestions</li> <li>▪ must not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, nor the order in which questions should be answered</li> <li>▪ must only tap on the desk or on the candidate's arm, depending on what is normal practice, in order to remind the candidate that he or she must pay attention to the question</li> <li>▪ must abide by the regulations; failure to do so can lead to the disqualification of the candidate.</li> </ul>
Alternative venue	Where normal venue is unsuitable for reasons to do with the impairment.	Normal invigilation procedures to be observed
Coloured paper	For example, visual/perceptual impairments	Centre to request special paper from NCC
Modified paper	For example, Braille, papers for deaf candidates with restricted language/vocabulary	Centre to request from NCC
Dictionary	Where the candidate is a non-native English speaker (however, dictionaries of computing, business and so forth are not permitted)	Electronic dictionaries are not allowed, nor any notes on paper within the dictionary.

### 3.3 Conditions of Pre-assessment Special Considerations

#### 3.3.1 Applying for Extra Time

Candidates who require extra time during the examination are required to provide a statement of needs from a recognised educational psychologist or medical doctor. This statement of needs should provide a definition of the condition (for example, Dyslexia, broken arm, and so forth) and state exactly how much extra time is needed. In most cases it is expected that this would not exceed 25% additional time.

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<sup>5</sup> A prompter may also act as a Reader if appropriate

### 3.3.2 Applying for Supervised Rest Breaks

Approval needs to be sought for this, and candidates are required to provide a statement of needs from a recognised educational psychologist or medical doctor. This statement of needs should state exactly how much time should be allocated to supervised rest breaks.

## 4. POST-ASSESSMENT SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

### 4.1 Post-Assessment Special Considerations: Introduction

Normally, where evidence of extenuating circumstances is provided by the candidate, he/she will have the opportunity to take the assessment at a later date as if for the first time, with no cap on their marks, since to preserve the integrity of awards candidates must demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes. An application for post-assessment special consideration will therefore rarely result in an adjustment to the marks given, and will not change the assessment criteria applied by the examiner for the examination in question. See page 11 for the application form. However, small adjustments in marks will be made in the cases described below.

### 4.2 Eligibility: When Is Post-Assessment Special Consideration Given?

An application may be eligible for post-assessment special consideration either:

- a. When a candidate's performance in an examination may have been affected by circumstances beyond his/her control, for example:
  - a personal trauma or upset shortly before or at the time of the examination, such as bereavement or family crisis
  - a minor injury occurring immediately before the examination, such as a sprained wrist
  - a sudden malfunction of the computer immediately before the examination, if it is required as part of the assessment
  - serious disturbance at the time of the examination, such as noise from nearby building works

OR

- b. When the examination is not completed due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control, for example:
  - disruption to the examination by external factors, such as a fire alarm or power failure.

### 4.3 Mark Adjustments

For NCC qualifications, NCC Assessment Board will give consideration to claims for post-assessment special consideration, and will normally either make a mark adjustment or will permit an uncapped resit attempt for candidates affected. Note that candidates can only be awarded marks where they have been able to demonstrate learning outcomes.

### 4.4 Procedure for Applying for Post-Assessment Special Considerations

If a candidate believes that they have been adversely affected by an event during an examination and that they therefore wish to apply for post-assessment special consideration, they must inform a member of staff from STC immediately after the end of the examination. When this occurs, the Centre is required to phone their NCC regional office within one working day to notify them of the occurrence.

STC will submit to NCC the written application form (electronically) with documentary evidence where appropriate (that is, medical evidence or a statement from an involved party) to their NCC Centre Support Executive within 14 (fourteen) days of the examination. The application must be signed and dated and the signatory must declare that the information given is accurate.





## NCC Education Application for Pre-assessment Special Considerations Requiring Prior Approval



NCC requires to record all adjustments made by the Centers. The following pro-forma is to be completed by STC Higher Education and sent to STC Support Executive at NCC Education.

<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Registration: No:</b>	

Report of adjustments made				
Candidate ID:		Name:		Module/ Unit:
Reason for adjustment:				
Type of adjustment:				
Supporting evidence:				
Notes:				

Agreed/authorised by NCC Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature:	
		Date:	

Contact their Centre Support Executive 8 (eight) weeks before the date of the examination concerned. The last date for making applications is the first of the month preceding the date of the examination, that is, by 01 February for the March assessment cycle.



## NCC Education Application for Pre-assessment Special Considerations Requiring Prior Approval



This form is to be completed by the student by the candidate and handled to STC Higher Education who will then pass it on to NCC Center Support Executive

<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Registration: No:</b>	

I wish to apply for pre-assessment special consideration.

Brief explanation of the condition:

Brief explanation of the special consideration request:

I have provided copies of supporting proof of disability and statement of needs from a recognised, qualified specialist.

Brief explanation of the supporting evidence provided:

Student signature:

Agreed/authorised by NCC Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signature:	
		Date:	

This form is to be completed by the student by the candidate and handled to STC Higher Education who will then pass it on to NCC Center Support Executive.

<b>Centre Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Name:</b>	
<b>Candidate Registration: No:</b>	

I wish to apply for post-assessment special consideration.

Brief explanation of the condition:

Brief explanation of the special consideration request:

Documentary evidence must be attached to this application.

Note: If you give false information or do not tell us about any changes to your condition you may be committing malpractice, and subject to penalties as outlined in the Candidate and Centre Sanctions Policy – up to and including disqualification from your assessments

I declare that the information given on the form is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

I understand that if I am claiming for pre-assessment special consideration and my condition changes I am required to inform NCC Education before the examination.

I understand that provision of false information or failure to inform NCC Education of changes to my condition could result in disciplinary action being taken against me and could result in my examination results being declared void and/or my membership being suspended.

<b>Signature of candidate:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

Note: If this form is signed by a third person on behalf of the candidate, please provide the following details of the person signing the form:

Name:	
Contact address:	
Relationship with candidate (for example, colleague, tutor, parent):	
Date:	

Form to be completed and returned to STC Higher Education, who will then pass it on to NCC Education Centre Support Executive.