

12 May 2022

May 2022 Exams and Assessment Update

This week our exam season got underway with a number of International Baccalaureate and Vocational assessments taking place. From next week the exams season starts in earnest with our GCSE and A level exams also starting.

A reminder that students can view their summer exam timetable on the Exams tab of their MyVarndean pages. Where a clash of exams occurs, the Exams Department will contact the students affected to make alternative arrangements.

It is of course impossible to predict with certainty that a public health crisis will not disrupt exams this summer. However, the chances of disruption and reverting to TAGs is now very small and we have been working hard to prepare students for normal exams and assessment to take place. The number of revision classes and dedicated workshops that have taken place across the college since February half term are testament to students and staff who have worked hard to be as prepared as possible.

The DfE have now provided guidance on what students should do if they contract COVID during the exam period ([link here](#)). The exam period has been expanded this year to allow for at least 10 days between the first and final exams of a subject, to reduce the chance of students being absent for all their exams through illness. Of course, students should always attend exams where possible, however there will be rare instances where illness is sufficiently serious that a student is prevented from attending an exam. In these cases, the procedure has always been for the student to apply to the exam board for special consideration. Special consideration would allow the exam board to award a grade based upon the exams the student has sat.

It should be noted that exam boards will not award a grade if a student has sat no exams within a series (i.e., the summer 2022 exam series). Essentially, exam boards have reverted to pre-COVID procedures for summer 2022 that allow students to apply for special consideration in the case of missing an exam due to illness.

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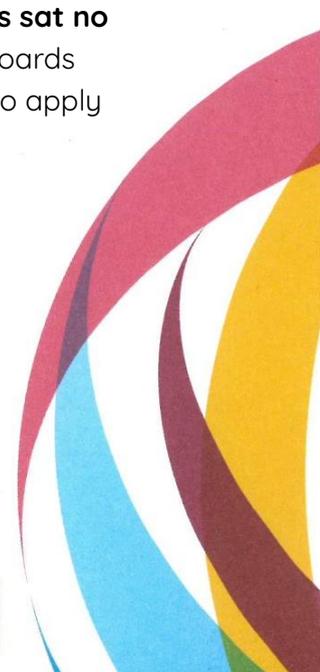
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The summer 2022 special consideration guidance makes little distinction between COVID and other illnesses. It is important to state that granting of special consideration is at the discretion of the Awarding Body (i.e. the exam board), not Varndean College.

Some further points:

- Students will not have to provide proof of a positive COVID test, however they may wish to take a photograph of a positive test for future records.
- Where an application for special consideration is being made, students and their parents or carers will have to complete the JCQ (Joint Council for Qualifications) Form 14-JCQ/ME-Self certification for candidate's form. The Exam Department can assist in the location of this form and submission to the relevant exam board.
- If students develop a high temperature on the day of the exam they should remain at home until the high temperature has subsided and are well enough to attend their exams. This is in line with UKHSA guidance.
- If students test positive for COVID, they should follow UKHSA guidance to stay at home and avoid contact with others for 3 days (if 18 years and under), or 5 days (if 19 years or older) after the day that they tested positive.
- JCQ guidance confirms that following UKHSA guidance is an acceptable reason for missing an exam and students will be eligible to receive special consideration.

In a normal examination year, we would see no more than a few applications for special consideration. We are all very hopeful that we will see similarly few applications for special consideration this summer.

A remind that the email for any exam related enquiry is exam@varndean.ac.uk

It remains for me to wish all students the very best of luck in their final preparation for exams and assessments over the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely,



James Gordon
Deputy Principal

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