Isabel Nisbet
Acting Chief Executive

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Ofqual

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25 January 2010

Dr John Canning
Chairman of the GPC Contracts & Performance Subcommittee
General Practitioners Committee
BMA House
Tavistock Square
London
WC1H 9JP

Our ref: RS2031

Dear Dr Canning,

Thank you for your letter of 9 September 2009, addressed to Andrew Hall, which, following your second letter, sent on 15 December 2009 has been passed to me as Acting Chief Executive of Ofqual, for response.

Awarding Organisations make no requirement for pupils to obtain a medical certificate in support of an application for special consideration. Students are asked for information in support of their application, but this may take the form of a statement by the school. The Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) has confirmed that as far as they are concerned, if a student was absent from an examination as a result of illness and has the support of the school or centre to be absent, special consideration will be granted on that basis. Awarding organisations do not insist that medical proof is provided.

I am sure that you have considered the likelihood that the misconception stems from the conventional necessity for adults to produce a sick note after long periods of absence from work. In order to address this issue with the schools we have contacted the Department for Children Schools and Families and requested that they made local authorities aware (via their weekly email) of this message, which they have now done. We have also informed the Joint Council for Qualifications and have posted a notice on our website. In addition we will pass on this message to the teacher associations and unions.

I hope this response is useful, but I can assure you that the regulations do not ask for medical corroboration in these circumstances and that I do not believe any misconception stems from the awarding organisations.

Yours sincerely,

Isabel M. Nisbet

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