SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROCEDURE

GOVERNING POLICY

This procedure is made under the Academic Performance Policy, which will state as follows:

Special Consideration is available to students who have had their studies significantly impacted by short-term circumstances reasonably beyond their control such as acute illness.

Ongoing and episodic circumstances, are managed through the Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure (SEAP) rather than Special Consideration, unless SEAP arrangements are insufficient for a particular circumstance.

To be eligible for Special Consideration students must have complied with the assessment requirements as set out in the subject outline and met one of the criteria below:

• a student has been prevented from preparing or presenting for all or part of a component of assessment such as assignments and examinations; or
• a student has been, to a significant degree, adversely affected during the performance of a component of assessment.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

External legislation:
Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)
The University of Melbourne Act 2009 (Vic)

University Legislation:
Statute 11.1 – Courses, Enrolment and Assessment
Statute 10.1 - Fees and Charges

SCOPE
This procedure applies to all courses and subjects at the University of Melbourne.

DEFINITIONS

| Alternative assessment | Component(s) of assessment administered to eligible students in a different form or under different conditions to the published requirements as a result of special consideration or other demonstrated circumstances. Alternative assessment may take any form determined by the relevant Board of Examiners. Includes special examinations. Sometimes referred to as 'additional assessment'. |
| Board of Examiners (BE) | The group of examiners responsible for assessment in each subject |
| Combined Board of Examiners (CBE) | A committee, comprising subject boards of examiners for a number of subjects within a degree or other award. |
### Episodic circumstances
Circumstances affecting a student's study which are not constant and occur periodically without warning, but which nevertheless, based on prior experience, can be predicted as potentially occurring and the impact anticipated.

### Examination
Assessment that is centrally scheduled and invigilated as part of the Semester 1, Semester 2, Summer or supplementary examination period.

### Extension
A variation to the due date for an assessment component that provides a student with extra time to complete it.

### Faculty Special Consideration Committee (FSCC)
A faculty or graduate school-based committee responsible for assessing Special Consideration applications for designated subjects.

### Health Professional
A health professional such as a medical doctor, psychologist or qualified social worker who is registered with the recognised professional body for their discipline.

### Hurdle requirement
Assessment component or other subject requirement (such as minimum attendance) that is not marked and does not contribute to a student's final grade, but must be completed in order for the student to pass the subject.

### Longer assessment
An individual assessment component worth 25% or more of the marks for the subject, and/or of 1000 words or more (or equivalent), or an exam.

### Ongoing circumstances
Circumstances affecting a student's study which are likely to last longer than six months.

### Shorter assessment
An individual assessment component worth less than 25% of the marks for the subject, and/or of less than 1000 words (or equivalent), other than an exam.

### Short-term circumstances
Acute circumstances affecting a student's study which do not fall within the definition of 'ongoing circumstances' or 'episodic circumstances'.

### Special consideration
A process which enables a student whose study has been significantly impacted by short-term circumstances reasonably beyond their control such as acute illness to seek changes to assessment requirements, conditions or timing. Ongoing and episodic circumstances are managed through the Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure (SEAP) rather than Special Consideration, unless SEAP arrangements are insufficient for a particular circumstance.

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**PROCEDURE**

1. **Eligibility for Special Consideration**

1.1 Students experiencing ongoing or episodic circumstances affecting their studies should seek advice from their Student Centre on whether they are eligible for consideration under the Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure.

1.2 Students whose study is affected as a defence reservist or emergency volunteer should apply for consideration under the Defence Reservists and Emergency Volunteers Procedure.

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1.3 Students whose study is affected as an elite athlete or performer should apply for consideration under the Elite Athletes & Performers Procedure.

1.4 Students experiencing short-term circumstances affecting their studies should apply for an extension under the Extensions Procedure if they are eligible and an extension is an appropriate outcome.

1.5 Students experiencing short-term circumstances affecting their studies who do not fall under 1.4 may apply for Special Consideration in accordance with this procedure.

1.6 Students who are appropriately supported under the Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure (SEAP) may still apply for Special Consideration where SEAP arrangements are insufficient for a particular circumstance. Faculty Special Consideration Committees will take into account any adjustments already in place under SEAP where relevant.

2. Submission of Special Consideration Applications

2.1 Students must submit an application for Special Consideration via the Student Portal no later than 5pm on the third working day after the submission/sitting date for the relevant assessment component.

2.2 Students must provide the following information as part of an application for Special Consideration:
   • nature of the circumstances that have impacted the assessment;
   • details of the subject(s) and assessment task(s) affected and the impact of the circumstances on each of the tasks, including the severity of the impairment; and
   • a completed Health Professional Report and/or other supporting documentation, submitted within five (5) working days of submission of the online application.

2.3 Students will receive automatic acknowledgement of their Special Consideration applications by email to their University email address.

2.4 Faculties/graduate schools will advise students by email to their University email address, when the Health Professional Report /supporting documentation has been received, or if it is not received within five (5) working days of the application being submitted online.

2.5 Faculties/graduate schools will reject applications for Special Consideration if the Health Professional Report /supporting documentation is not received within five (5) working days of the application being submitted online, unless the student demonstrates extenuating circumstances, and students will be notified by email that their application has been rejected.

2.6 Faculties/graduate schools may permit students to submit a Statutory Declaration, medical certificate and/or other supporting documentation in place of a Health Professional Report where the application for Special Consideration relates to shorter assessments.

3. Consideration for Shorter Assessments

3.1 Subject coordinators may, at their own discretion, grant consideration for shorter assessments without requiring the student to submit an application for Special Consideration in accordance with section 2, depending on the subject and individual assessment component.
3.2 Students who wish to apply for consideration for shorter assessments without submitting an application for Special Consideration in accordance with section 2 must apply directly to the subject coordinator.

3.3 Where subject coordinators grant consideration for shorter assessments without requiring the student to submit an application for Special Consideration in accordance with section 2, the subject coordinator must ensure that:

- the process for seeking consideration is published in the subject outline (via the LMS);
- applications for consideration and outcomes are documented and reported to the Board of Examiners/Combined Board of Examiners (BE/CBE) as necessary;
- determination of eligibility and outcomes is conducted fairly and equitably; and
- the student is still able to demonstrate he or she has satisfied the objectives of the subject.

3.4 Subject coordinators may grant students exemptions from shorter assessments (and re-weight other components of assessment in the subject as outlined in Schedule A – Assessing Special Consideration Applications) where the skills developed and accumulated across the teaching period can be demonstrated appropriately through other assessment tasks. Examples of when this may be the case include:

- where multiple tasks are completed as a set (usually as a hurdle requirement), e.g. weekly exercises and laboratory work; and
- where the student has only missed one or two classes and/or reports/exercises/tasks over a teaching period, according to guidelines published with assessment details in the subject outline.

3.5 Subject coordinators will exercise discretion under this section in accordance with applicable faculty or graduate school guidelines, which may include referral to a committee.

4. **Health Professional Report and Supporting Documentation**

4.1 Where the Special Consideration application is made on health grounds, students must submit a Health Professional Report completed and signed by a health professional familiar with the student’s circumstances.

4.2 Students may provide other supporting documentation in addition to the Health Professional Report for a Special Consideration application made on health grounds.

4.3 Where the Special Consideration application is made on non-health grounds, students must provide appropriate supporting documentation, which may include:

- police report;
- death notice or certificate;
- evidence of public transport delays; or
- other appropriate documentation.

4.4 Supporting documentation must, where possible, verify the student’s circumstances and address the impact of those circumstances on the assessment tasks. Absence of evidence outlining the impact may affect the outcome of the application.

4.5 Students may submit a statutory declaration, which can be downloaded as part of the online application for Special Consideration, if:

- no other supporting documentation is available; and

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• there are no suitably informed independent persons who can either verify or comment on the circumstances and their impact. Lack of independent verification is likely to affect the outcome of the application and further evidence may be requested.

4.6 Students may nominate University staff members to either verify or comment on their circumstances and the impact in addition to submitting supporting documentation where appropriate.

4.7 Students must ensure the Health Professional Report and/or other supporting documentation is submitted to the University within five working days of the submission of the online Special Consideration application.

5 Late Applications

5.1 Faculties/graduate schools will consider a Special Consideration application late if:
• it is submitted more than three working days after the date for completion of the component of assessment to which the application refers;
• it is submitted more than three working days after the date specified for the performance or submission of the final component of assessment in the relevant subject, if the application relates to a student’s performance in a subject as a whole rather than a specific assessment component; or
• the Health Professional Report and/or other supporting documentation is not received within five working days of the application being submitted online.

5.2 The Academic Registrar or nominee (such as a Student Centre Manager) will determine whether a late application for Special Consideration will be accepted.

5.3 Students submitting a late application for Special Consideration must provide:
• an explanation for late submission of the application and evidence to show that the submission of a timely application was not practicable; and
• the same documentation that would be required for a timely application.

5.4 Faculties/graduate schools will only accept applications for Special Consideration made after the release of final subject results to students in exceptional circumstances, determined at the discretion of the faculty/graduate school.

5.5 Faculties/graduate schools will consider accepted late applications in the same manner as timely applications.

6 Evaluation of Applications

6.1 Subject coordinators will:
• determine appropriate Special Consideration outcomes for individual subjects and assessment tasks, in accordance with faculty/graduate school guidelines; and
• advise faculty/graduate school Special Consideration committees of the appropriate Special Consideration outcomes for individual subjects and assessment tasks.

6.2 Faculty/graduate school Special Consideration committees will:
• seek advice from subject coordinators on disciplinary issues as required;
• assess the impact of the circumstances on a student’s performance with regard to the nature of the assessment task, as outlined in Schedule A – Assessing Special Consideration Applications;
• determine eligibility for Special Consideration; and
• recommend outcomes for Special Consideration applications as outlined in Schedule A – Assessing Special Consideration Applications, based on advice of appropriate outcomes from subject coordinators.

7 Notification to Students

7.1 Faculties/graduate schools will record the outcome of Special Consideration applications in the student system.

7.2 Students will receive notification of the outcome of Special Consideration applications via their University email addresses within five working days of receipt of both the application and the supporting documentation, except in circumstances outlined in section 7.3.

7.3 Students will receive notification of the outcome of Special Consideration applications relating to examinations and final assessment tasks via their University email addresses on or after the release of final subject results.

7.4 Faculties/graduate schools will:
  • advise students of the nature and proposed timing of any additional assessment or special examinations offered;
  • provide students with a contact who is able to advise the student of the reasons for the decision; and
  • invite students to discuss the implications of undertaking the additional assessment or special examination with the subject coordinator if they wish.

7.5 Where offered, special examinations will be held in the supplementary examination period. Students should consult the examination timetable for examination details.

7.6 Students must be available during additional assessment periods to undertake additional assessment or special examinations granted as a result of Special Consideration. Alternatives outside the additional assessment period will not be offered.

8 Confidentiality

8.1 The University will ensure that information provided for a Special Consideration application will be managed in accordance with the Privacy Policy, including appropriate storage and disposal of records/documentation.

8.2 The University will restrict access to sensitive confidential information relating to a Special Consideration application to those responsible for assessing the application.

8.3 Students may request that applications be treated as highly confidential. In this circumstance, a responsible officer designated by the faculty/graduate school will:
  • hold the application; and
• provide advice to subject coordinators of the seriousness of the circumstances and their impact without providing the detail of those circumstances, where necessary for outcomes determination and/or timing of alternative assessment.

9 Applications after Attendance at Exam

9.1 Students seeking Special Consideration for an exam must submit a Special Consideration application within three working days of the exam if:
• they attend the exam but are unfit to complete it; or
• they complete the exam but believe their performance was significantly impaired by illness or other due cause.

9.2 Students granted a special examination following a Special Consideration application for a final exam must choose whether to attend the special examination, regardless of whether they have received the mark for the first exam or not. If the student chooses to attend the special examination, the mark from the special examination will supersede the mark from the first examination (even if the mark in the first examination is higher than the mark in the second examination).

10 Further Consideration

10.1 Within the relevant academic period, faculties/graduate schools will only accept Special Consideration applications relating to an assessment task or variation to assessment granted on the basis of a previous application for Special Consideration, in exceptional circumstances, and in these cases, only once.

10.2 Where a student is unable to complete further assessments offered on the basis of Special Consideration due to ongoing circumstances, Student Centres:
• will assist the student to appropriately reconstruct their study plan; and
• may make a recommendation to the subject coordinator or faculty/graduate school Special Consideration committee that the student is (retrospectively) withdrawn from the subject.

11 Reporting

11.1 Faculties and graduate schools will report biannually to the Academic Board on matters related to Special Consideration as required by the Board. Reporting of application rates and outcomes will be anonymous and no individual’s circumstances will be identifiable.

12 Appeals

12.1 Students may submit a complaint or grievance in relation to the application of this procedure in accordance with the Student Complaints and Grievances Policy and the Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure.

SCHEDULES

Schedule A – Assessing Special Consideration Applications

RELATED DOCUMENTS

• Academic Performance Policy
• Assessment Procedure
• Defence Reservists and Emergency Volunteers Procedure

Special Consideration Procedure
APPROVED 19 July 2012
• Elite Athletes and Performers Procedure
• Examinations Procedure
• Extensions Procedure
• Health Professional Report
• Student Complaints and Grievances Policy
• Student Complaints and Grievances Procedure
• Student Support and Engagement Policy
• Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER
The Academic Registrar is responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this procedure and any associated guidelines.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER
The Manager, Policy and Programs (Office of the Provost) is responsible for the promulgation and implementation of this procedure in accordance with the scope outlined above. Enquiries about interpretation of this procedure should be directed to the Implementation Officer.

REVIEW
This procedure is to be reviewed by 30 November 2013.

VERSION HISTORY

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POLICY LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS

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To select, double-click on checkbox, then select ‘Checked’.

- Courses and subjects
- Finance and procurement
- Governing the University
- Managing buildings and IT
- Reaching out to the community
- Research and research training
- Studying at the University
- Teaching and learning
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| Keywords                          | medical, illness, special circumstances, assessment, examination, extension |
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROCEDURE
SCHEDULE A – ASSESSING SPECIAL CONSIDERATION APPLICATIONS

Assessing Applications
In assessing whether to offer Special Consideration, faculty/graduate school committees will:

• Uphold the integrity of courses and academic programs, and assessment requirements and processes, so that students on whom the University confers an award can present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience and expertise implicit in the holding of that award.

• Determine whether additional assessment may reasonably be provided to the student, given the inherent requirements of a subject, and the need to ensure the equitable treatment of all students. There may be aspects of a course or subject for which no Special Consideration is possible.

Faculty/graduate school committees will recommend Special Consideration where supporting documentation validates the student’s claims that their performance has been significantly disadvantaged by circumstances having a severe impact (see impact ratings below).

Impact Ratings

1. Unknown impact on the assessment task/s
   The impact of the condition is not able to be determined.

2. No impact on the assessment task/s
   The circumstance does not have an impact on the student’s ability to complete the assessment/s (e.g. normal range of anxiety about sitting an examination or completing an assessment task).

3. Slight impact on the assessment task/s
   A circumstance may be assessed as slight where it is an event that produces minor inconvenience or a condition is able to be alleviated with non-prescription medications. The impact of the condition is not serious and has not had a significant impact on the student’s ability to complete assessment task/s (e.g. a condition where over-the-counter medication will
provide relief with no serious impact on the student’s ability to sit an examination, or to complete an assessment task).

4. **Moderate impact on the assessment task/s**

A circumstance may be assessed as moderate where it has been impacting for less than half the time set for the task and/or its preparation and the student's ability to complete the assessment is moderately affected (e.g. an illness which has caused some discomfort but has not had a severe impact on the student's ability to sit an examination or to complete an assessment task).

5. **Severe impact on the assessment task/s**

A circumstance may be assessed as severe if it has significantly impacted for more than half the time set for the task, and is of sufficient intensity to interfere with the student’s day-to-day life for this period. Late withdrawal may be recommended where a severe condition or circumstance means a student is unlikely to be able to complete additional or alternative assessment.

6. **Combinations of factors**

Factors which individually are ‘insufficient grounds’ for Special Consideration should be considered to have severe impact if the combined effect is assessed as suitably significant.

7. **Residual impact**

Where it is assessed that there is a residual significant impact on a student who is now well, the impact may be considered severe.

**Outcomes**

Outcomes for Special Consideration applications will not depend on whether students have passed the relevant components of assessment.

After an assessment of the impact of the circumstances on a student's performance, and with regard to the nature of the assessment task, the outcome of an application may be:

1. **Ineligible**

   The student has already failed a hurdle requirement (to which the Special Consideration application does not apply) and is therefore ineligible.

   OR

   The application was not submitted within three working days (before or after) the due date for assessment (student should be advised of the late application procedure).

   OR

   The Health Professional Report and/or other supporting documentation was not received within five working days of submission of the online application.

2. **Insufficient grounds**

   The application does not meet guidelines for severe impact.
3. **Special Assessment/Examination**

Special assessment will normally take the form of a formally supervised written examination, but this may be varied to take into account the circumstances of the student. Special assessment will be assigned the same weighting and with the same range of available grades as the component of assessment it replaces.

4. **Extension**

Additional time granted for submission of a component of assessment.

5. **Exemption**

The affected assessment component will be waived and other components of assessment in the subject will be re-weighted. For example, a student completes an essay worth 20%, but is unable to sit a within-semester test worth 20%. The within-semester test is waived and the end-of-semester exam, normally worth 60%, is re-weighted to 80%.

Exemption should only be considered when the student is able to demonstrate appropriately their satisfactory completion of all subject objectives within the assessment that has been completed.

Students may only be exempted from individual assessment tasks that are within-semester, not final, assessment tasks, and worth no more than 25% of the total assessment for the subject. Where students are exempted from more than one assessment task in a subject, the total of the exempted tasks must not exceed 25% of the total assessment for the subject.

6. **No appropriate action**

Adjustments should be applied outside the Special Consideration Procedure (i.e. through another procedure such as Student Equitable Adjustment Procedure or Extensions Procedure). All within-semester extensions of ten working days or less (regardless of whether the assessment component is worth more or less than 25% of the total marks for the subject) should be dealt with in accordance with the Extensions Procedure.

OR

The application relates to shorter assessments which are dealt with under section 3 of the Special Consideration Procedure.

OR

There are technical inconsistencies with the application, e.g. the Health Professional Report is not signed by a health professional, or the date and nature of the assessment task does not accord with the supporting documentation (student should be advised to resubmit the application within five working days).

OR

Additional assessment is not appropriate where assessors or clinical arrangements cannot be reorganised, or for a group task where the group cannot be reformed to repeat the task.

7. **Late withdrawal recommended**

A student who applies for Special Consideration may be advised to withdraw from a subject (without academic penalty) and repeat it if:

- the student’s circumstance is considered likely to prevent them from completing additional assessment;
• additional assessment is not appropriate where assessors or clinical arrangements cannot be reorganised; or
• for a group task, the group cannot be reformed to repeat the task.

A student advised to withdraw may, depending on the circumstances, be additionally advised to apply for remission of fee liability.