Special Consideration Procedure

Section 1 - Governing Policy

(1) These procedures are governed by the Assessment Policy and relate to the Assessment Procedure.

Section 2 - Purpose

(2) This Procedure is designed to provide support for students whose participation in an assessment task or other assessable activity has been significantly hampered by exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond their control and where other processes, are not applicable or are no longer possible because of the timing and/or severity of the circumstances.

Section 3 - Scope

(3) This Procedure sets out the grounds for which students may apply for Special Consideration, and the process for applying for Special Consideration.

Section 4 - Temporary Medical Conditions or Exceptional and Unforeseen Circumstances

(4) If a student has a temporary medical condition, or they are/have been affected by exceptional and unforeseen circumstances, they can apply for adjustments or Special Consideration according to the criteria and processes set out in Section 3 of the Assessment Procedure.

(5) Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances are those that:

a. could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student; and
b. were beyond the student's control; and
c. occurred during a critical time in the study period and were at least three consecutive days duration, or a total of five days across the study period; and/or
d. caused substantial disruption to the student’s capacity to prepare for, or complete assessment for the unit(s), or achieve the level of attainment typical of their previous performance in the unit(s); and/or
e. prevented completion of an assessment activity scheduled for a specific date.

Section 5 - Grounds for Special Consideration

(6) Grounds for Special Consideration must demonstrate that the student’s capacity to complete learning/ teaching and/or assessment tasks has been affected.

(7) Circumstances which may constitute grounds for Special Consideration based on a temporary medical condition

and/or exceptional and unforeseen circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. a serious medical condition, psychiatric illness, severe depression and/or substance addiction;
b. ongoing serious family issues, including illness, abusive situations, socio-economic disadvantage;
c. death of a close relative or friend;
d. political unrest or disaster, which places family members in jeopardy in home country;
e. an accident or trauma which has caused a temporary medical/mental condition;
f. activities covered by the Support for Student Defence Reserves and Emergency Service Personnel Policy. In the case of a Defence Reservist or for Emergency Services personnel, written confirmation of the duration of the service, or other activity, is required from the Defence Reserve or recognised Emergency Services organisation.

(8) The following list provides some examples of circumstances which do not constitute grounds for Special Consideration:

a. non-completion of a pre-requisite unit;
b. timetable clashes and/or misreading of the timetable;
c. heavy academic workload and/or professional experience requirements;
d. employment or sporting commitments (students enrolled under the Elite Athlete and Performer Scheme will have relevant requirements previously authorised);

> See Elite Athlete and Performer Program Policy.

e. family commitments such as preparing for a wedding, party or event;
f. travel commitments; or
g. any claims which are unsubstantiated by relevant supporting documentation.

Section 6 - Required Evidence and/or Supporting Documentation

Health Related Matters

(9) For health-related matters the Professional Authority Section of the Special Consideration Form must be completed by a registered professional such as a:

a. medical practitioner (including psychiatrist or other specialist);
b. psychologist;
c. dentist;
d. physiotherapist; or
e. counsellor.

(10) Where the health-related matter is of a confidential nature the registered professional may indicate as such on the form.

(11) The registered professional should specify the nature of how the medical condition has had an impact on the student's ability to attend or undertake the assessment task(s).

Non-Health Related Matters

(12) For non-health-related matters the student must provide documentation that verifies the circumstances that may have caused disadvantage.

(13) Examples of such documentation may include:

a. a death notice or certificate;
b. police report;
c. Statutory Declaration.

(14) If relevant, the student should provide details on why they were prevented from applying for adjustments by the due date of the assessment task.

(15) Any person who completes the Professional Authority Section of the relevant form or verifies supporting documentation must not be related to the student.

(16) The evidence provided must:

a. identify the circumstances, noting the provisions of clauses (10) and (11);
b. include dates and/or the length of the circumstances;
c. explain the severity and impact of the circumstances;
d. clearly describe how the circumstances have adversely affected the student's capacity for effective study to which an assessment task or other assessable activity relates;
e. where applicable, include the date(s) on which the student was seen by the professional providing the evidence;

(17) The University reserves the right to request and retain originals of supporting documentation.

(18) ACU will conduct regular audits of supporting documentation submitted electronically to safeguard against fraudulent or falsified documentation.

Section 7 - Timing and submission of applications

(19) Applications for Special Consideration should be submitted prior to, or up to five working days after, the relevant due date.

(20) Applications must be submitted to the School office of the School responsible for the unit for which a student is seeking Special Consideration. In cases where a student is seeking consideration for multiple assessments, the application should be submitted to the School office of the School responsible for the course.

Section 8 - Outcomes

(21) Where an application for Special Consideration relates to a single unit, the relevant National Unit Lead will consider the application and has the authority to uphold or dismiss the request.

(22) Where an application for Special Consideration relates to a multiple units, the relevant Course Adviser, in consultation with the National Unit Lead will consider the application and has the authority to uphold or dismiss the request.

(23) If a Special Consideration application is upheld, the National Unit Lead or Course Adviser will determine the most

appropriate action that should be taken in response to the student's circumstances. The recommended outcome may only be one of the following:

a. no action;
b. granting of a longer extension than is normally granted;
c. offering an alternative form of assessment.

Section 9 - Notification

(24) Students will be advised of the outcome of an application for Special Consideration within 10 working days of the date of submission of the relevant form.

(25) Notification of the outcome will be by email to the student's ACU email address.

Section 10 - Permanent Disability or Long-term Medical Condition

(26) Where a student has a permanent disability and/or long-term medical condition they should consult a Disability Adviser from the Access and Disability Service at the time of enrolment, to register for appropriate adjustments.

(27) The Disability Adviser will work with the student to develop an Education Inclusion Plan (EIP) that sets out the necessary adjustments.

(28) If the circumstances are relevant, this does not exclude students from applying for adjustment/s and/or Special Consideration, under the criteria set out in Schedule 1, additional to any adjustments approved in a student EIP.

Section 11 - Student Responsibilities

(29) Students must follow the prescribed application process, including relevant timelines and authorities and provide any required documentary evidence as required in these procedures.

(30) Students must retain all original documentation for a six-month period and must supply original documents to the University within 10 working days of such a request being made.

(31) Students are responsible for undertaking any additional or alternative assessable work as an outcome of an application for Special Consideration.

Section 12 - Staff Responsibilities

(32) Information contained in the forms and supporting documentation will only be accessed by staff who need this information to carry out their responsibilities under this Procedure.

(33) Staff must ensure that forms and supporting documentation submitted are treated with confidentiality and information is handled in accordance with ACU's Privacy Policy and associated procedures.

(34) Staff must adhere to relevant processes and operate within the relevant timelines for decision making.

Section 13 - Recordkeeping

(35) Records related to Special Consideration will be maintained in accordance with the ACU Records and Archive Management Policy and Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Section 14 - Associated Information

(36) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th December 2023
Review Date	1st November 2024
Approval Authority	
Approval Date	19th December 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Helen Murnane Academic Registrar
Responsible Manager	Helen Murnane Academic Registrar
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