What is Special Consideration?

Special consideration is the process for assessing the impact of short-term events beyond your control (exceptional circumstances), on your performance in a specific assessment task. You can find more detail in the UNSW Application and Assessment Information document.

Important information for online assessments

If you experience problems during an online assessment and you want to apply for special consideration, refer to this information:

Steps to follow for online assessments

Technical Issues

If you experience a technical issue, you should take the following steps:

- Take screenshots of as many of the following as possible:
  - error messages
  - screen not loading
  - timestamped speed tests
  - power outage maps
- If the Course Coordinator or Tutor is present online during the assessment in chat, make contact immediately and advise them of the issue.
- Submit a Special Consideration application immediately at the conclusion of your assessment and upload your screenshots.
- Your special consideration application will be reviewed, and an outcome updated within 3-5 working days.

Fit to Sit

By sitting or submitting an assessment on the scheduled assessment date, you are declaring that you are fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration.

If, during an online exam you feel unwell to the point that you cannot continue with the exam, you should take the following steps:

- Stop working on the exam and take note of the time
- If the Course Coordinator or Tutor is present online during the assessment in chat, make contact immediately and advise them that you are unwell
- Immediately submit a Special Consideration application saying that you felt ill during the exam and were unable to continue
- If you were able to advise your Course Coordinator or Tutor of your illness during the assessment, attach
screenshots of this conversation to your Special Consideration application

Time zones

- If your online assessment is a timed assessment (ie: scheduled at a specific time – Australian Eastern Standard Time, AEST), you must make yourself available at the time advised.
- Special Consideration will not be awarded on the grounds that you are in a different timezone and that either:
  - the assessment is at an inconvenient time for your timezone, or
  - for failure to realise an exam is being conducted at AEST.

What are circumstances beyond my control?

These are exceptional circumstances or situations that may:

- Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- Keep you from attending an assessment,
- Stop you from submitting an assessment,
- Significantly affect your assessment performance.

Available here is a list of circumstances that may be beyond your control. This is only a list of examples, and your exact circumstances may not be listed.

If you need support with an assessment, check available Educational Adjustments before applying for Special Consideration. These adjustments, such as note taking services, assistive technology and classwork support may be more appropriate in some cases.

Special Consideration Application Process

When to apply

You must apply for Special Consideration before the start of your exam or due date for your assessment, except where your circumstances of illness or misadventure stop you from doing so.

If your circumstances stop you from applying before your exam or assessment due date, you must apply within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by your supporting documentation.

UNSW has a Fit to Sit/Submit rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit an assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. Read more information on Fit to Sit/Submit below.

Check Applicable Circumstances

Your circumstances may be applicable for Special Consideration if they are short-term, serious, unavoidable and:

- were unexpected and beyond your control,
- substantially disturbed your assessment performance,
- could not have reasonably been anticipated, expected or avoided
and

- occurred during an important study or assessment period and lasted for 3 days in a row or a total of 5 days or,
- prevented you from completing or attending an assessment on a specific date or due date.

Before submitting an application for Special Consideration, check if your circumstances are similar to any on the exceptional circumstances list.

You can check our FAQ for some of the common non-applicable circumstances.

More detailed information on applicable circumstances can be found in the UNSW Application and Assessment Information document.

Check the Timeframe to Submit In (Fit to Sit/Submit Policy)

In addition to your circumstances being applicable, you must also check that your circumstances and your application for Special Consideration are within the eligible time frames.

More information on Fit to Sit/Submit and Time Frames for Applying For Consideration can be found in the UNSW Application and Assessment Information document.

For exams, tests (online or in class), presentations and other timed assessments:

Before the exam: You can apply.

During the exam: If you feel unwell to the point that you cannot continue with your exam, you must stop working, tell a staff member and you can apply within 3 working days of the assessment date. Your supporting evidence must be dated within 24 hours of the assessment date.

After you have attended the exam: You are not eligible for Special Consideration. Exceptions will be considered if it is clear that you were prevented from making an informed decision.
For assignments, essays, reports and other assessments with a set due date:

**Before the due date**: You can apply. Please do not wait to submit your assignment if you have applied for Special Consideration as we cannot guarantee an outcome.

**After the due date**: You are not eligible for Special Consideration. Exceptions will be considered if it is clear that you were prevented from making an informed decision or if your circumstances lasted across the study period and due date.
How to apply

1. Prepare your supporting documentation

When you apply for Special Consideration, you **must** provide UNSW with sufficient and appropriate evidence that clearly shows the details of your circumstances. Your evidence must identify the:

- **Circumstances**: Describe the situation in as much detail as possible.
- **Time frame**: Include dates and length of the circumstances.
- **Severity**: How serious the circumstances are and how they have impacted you and your assessment performance.
The evidence you provide will be used in assessing your application, so it is very important to provide all relevant supporting documents.

For Term 1 2020, if you are not able to provide evidence to support your application, please submit your application together with a word document that summarises your circumstances. The Case Review team will then contact you directly.

If your supporting documentation is not in English, please submit this and we will attempt to have this translated. Where documentation cannot be translated, you may be asked to have this translated by a NAATI accredited translator. If this occurs, you should supply copies of the original document and a complete English translation.

Available here is a list of the common supporting documents or evidence for exceptional circumstances. This list is not final and you may have other forms of supporting documents as evidence for your circumstances.

It is recommended that you use the UNSW Professional Authority form as a supporting document for medical circumstances. Backdated or out of date medical certificates may not be accepted.

If you provide falsified documents in support of your application, then this will result in one of a range of penalties, from failure in the course to suspension or exclusion. In some cases, the matter could also be reported to ICAC.

More detailed information on Supporting Documentation for Applications can be found in the UNSW Application and Assessment Information document.

2. Apply through myUNSW

Once you have supporting documents, you can apply for Special Consideration online through your myUNSW account.

1. Login to the Special Consideration portal on myUNSW (My Student Profile -> Special Consideration)

2. Click New Application and complete the Student Declaration

3. Enter your contact details, course information and supporting documentation
Your Details

Student ID [redacted]
First Name [redacted]
Last Name [redacted]
Program Name

* Contact Number [redacted]
* Email

Period for which special consideration is sought:

* From
* To

Enter your phone number and email address.

Enter the start and end date of your circumstance.

Choose your Course from the drop down.

Add Assessment:

* Course -- Please select a course --

Add Course

Supporting Notes:

* Summary: (2000 characters remaining)

You can click here again to add another course.

You can use this text box to describe your circumstance in detail.

You must attach supporting documents.
The evidence you provide will be used to assess your application.

Supporting Documents:

You are required to submit medical or other official documentation that supports your application. You can upload the documents here. Failure to do so may result in this application being rejected.

* Attachment
Choose File No file chosen

(doc,.docx,.pdf,.jpg,.png)

A maximum of 3 files may be uploaded.
The maximum size allowed for each attachment is 3 MB.
Attachments larger than this will not be accepted.
After application

What happens after I apply?

Your details, including all of the documentation provided by you, will be received by the Student Case Reviews Team. UNSW’s procedures ensure that the confidentiality of this information is maintained.

Once you have applied for Special Consideration, UNSW will assess the information and evidence you provided.

The majority of applications will be processed within 3-5 business days.

To determine the outcome of your application, the following may be taken into account:

- Your performance in other assessments in the course
- The severity of your circumstances and their effect on your performance
- The type of assessment that was affected by your circumstances
- Your academic standing and academic progression

If you are applying for special consideration for an assessment (ie. essay, report), you are not expected to wait for the application to be approved before submitting the assessment. You should continue to work on the assessment and submit this when you believe you have completed your assessment to a satisfactory standard. If an extension is approved, it will be applied from the original due date.

What outcomes can I expect?

If your application is approved, the outcome may be one of the following:

- A supplementary or alternative assessment,
- An extended deadline for the assessment,
- An aggregated or averaged mark derived from other comparable completed assessments.

Your Course Convenor may be contacted to help determine the most appropriate outcome for your circumstances.

Applying for Special Consideration does not automatically mean that you will be granted additional assessment, or that you will be awarded an amended result. For example, if you have a poor record of attendance or performance throughout a Term in a course, you may be failed regardless of illness or other reason affecting a final examination in that course.

What if I am not happy with the outcome of my application?

You can request a reassessment

If it is not longer than 3 business days since your received your outcome AND you are able to provide additional supporting documentation and/or information to support your application, you can request a reassessment of your application by sending an email to specialconsideration@unsw.edu.au

You can appeal an outcome

If you do not have additional documentation and/or information, but you are unsatisfied with the result of an application you can appeal the outcome by sending an email to specialconsideration@unsw.edu.au.
Important Student Responsibilities

Applying for Special Consideration is an official UNSW process and means that you have responsibilities under the UNSW Student Code and the Special Consideration Student Declaration that you must be aware of.

Significant Personal Information

If you feel that your circumstances are too significant or personal to use in the Special Consideration process, you may prefer to use other UNSW Support Services.

It is always important and is your responsibility to let UNSW know if there is anything that may affect your ability to continue your studies.

Frequently asked questions

Common Non-Applicable Circumstances

UNSW does not provide special consideration when circumstances are the consequence of a student’s own action or inaction.

Some common examples of circumstances that are not usually considered eligible include:

- Misreading the course outline,
- Misreading the examination timetable,
- Attending events such as:
  - Concerts
  - Talk shows,
  - Sporting events (excluding university games/ elite competitions),
  - Protests,
- Holidays,
- Professional experience organised independently by student,
- Heavy academic work load
- Course overloading,
- Two or more assessments due on the same date
- Work commitments (unless unexpected and unavoidable).

Can I provide more supporting documentation after applying?

You can provide additional supporting documentation after you have submitted your application by emailing the Student Case Review team. Please do not submit a second Special Consideration application.

Do I need to apply for Special Consideration if I'm missing a class?

You only need to apply for Special Consideration if you are missing a class that is any one of the following:

- class participation that counts towards your final mark (check your course outline), or
- puts you under the minimum attendance requirements for your course, or
- if you have an in-class assessment that day.

My assessment type is not in the Special Consideration portal

If your assessment type is not in the Special Consideration portal, please choose the closest type of assessment and explain in more detail in the summary box in your application.
Can I apply for Special Consideration for all of my assessments in a Term?

Special Consideration is for short-term circumstances that impact your performance during a particular study or assessment period.

If your circumstance will be long-term or is recurring and will impact your performance across multiple assessments periods, you should consider using other student support services that UNSW can provide.

In particular, you may wish to learn more about the Equitable Learning Service for help with ongoing educational adjustments.

You can still apply for Special Consideration for multiple assessments.

I need to attach more than 3 files to my application, what should I do?

If you have more than 3 files to attach as evidence for your application, please do not submit multiple applications. Instead, you can:

- Combine the files into one document or
- Email the additional files directly to the Student Case Review team.

I need to add another course or assessment to my application

You can add multiple courses or assessments to your Special Consideration application by clicking on the 'Add Courses' button.

If you have already applied for Special Consideration and need to add another course or assessment, please complete a new application.

I'm registered with the Equitable Learning Service, do I need to apply for Special Consideration?

If you are registered with Equitable Learning Services, you should only apply for Special Consideration for illnesses related to your disability, where:

- you experience an exacerbation of your disability, or
- you have unexpected treatment or hospitalisation, or
- your caring demands for a person with a disability increase.

If you experience illness, misadventure or circumstances beyond your control that has nothing to do with your disability but affects your studies or exams, you may also be eligible to apply for Special Consideration.

Read more about the difference between educational adjustments & special consideration online