Special Consideration

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances beyond your control, interfere with your assessment performance. Are you receiving assistance from Disability Services?

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,
- Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

Application

When to apply

Applications are accepted in the following circumstances only:

- Where academic work has been hampered to a substantial degree by illness or other cause. Except in unusual circumstances, the duration of circumstances impacting academic work must be more than 3 consecutive days, or a total of 5 days within the teaching period.
- The circumstances must be unexpected and beyond your control. Students are expected to give priority to their university study commitments, and any absence must clearly be for circumstances beyond your control. Work commitments are not normally considered a justification.
- You cannot claim consideration for conditions or circumstances that are the consequences of your own actions or inactions.
- An absence from an examination or inability to complete an assessment task, must be supported by a medical certificate or other document that clearly indicates that you were unable to comply. If you are absent from an examination or if you attend your examination and subsequently want to apply for special consideration, you would normally be required to provide a medical certificate which covers the date of the examination and includes the medical practitioner’s professional opinion on your capacity to study/sit an exam during that period.
- An application for Special Consideration together with supporting documentation must be submitted online within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation. In exceptional circumstances an application may be accepted outside these limits.

Applications are normally not considered if:
The condition or event is not related to performance or is considered to be not serious
Any key information is missing
Supporting documentation does not meet requirements
Supporting documentation has not been presented to Student Central for verification

In exceptional circumstances UNSW may waive these requirements, for example, if an accident or sudden illness occurs which requires your immediate hospitalisation.

Important things to note

- Please be aware that 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. As a student, you must be aware of your obligations and responsibilities under the Student Code which can be found here: [https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct](https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct).
- Depending on the circumstances, UNSW may take action to allow you to overcome the disadvantage, e.g. give you additional assessment or extend a deadline.
- Merely submitting a request 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 Semester in a course, you may be failed regardless of illness or other reason affecting a final examination in that course.
- UNSW has a centralised procedure for Special Consideration applications. Many course authorities and faculties have procedures that you will also need to follow.
- It sometimes happens that a student encounters a situation so significant or personal that they do not want to use the Special Consideration procedures. In a case like this you may prefer to contact the University Health Service, Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS), an academic adviser in your program office or the Manager, Student Administration. It is always important to let UNSW know if there is anything that may affect your ability to continue your studies.

How to apply

To apply for Special Consideration:

1. You must make formal application for Special Consideration for the course/s affected as soon as practicable after the problem occurs and within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation.
2. The application must be made through Online Services in myUNSW (My Student Profile tab > My Student Services > Online Services > Special Consideration).
   
   You must obtain and attach Third Party documentation before submitting the application. Failure to do so may result in the application being rejected.
3. Submit to Student Central or mail to Student Administration - Special Consideration, UNSW Sydney NSW 2052, either:
   - Original supporting documentation, or
   - A completed Professional Authority Form (PDF 46KB).

Please note:
You must submit the supporting documentation to Student Central for verification within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation. Failure to submit within this timeframe may result in your application being rejected.

You must also follow any local Faculty course or program authority procedures. The course authority or Faculty representative will have given you these procedures when you started the course or program, in the course brochure/information sheet.

Supporting documentation

To give UNSW sufficient and appropriate information on which to base its decision about your request, you must support your application with certified official documentation. This documentation normally contains at least the following key information:

1. Assessment task/s for which you are seeking consideration
2. Dates/deadlines associated with these tasks
3. Basis of your request, i.e. the nature of your misadventure, illness, etc.
4. Date/s on which you were seen by the professional/authority providing your official documentation
5. Date of the illness or misadventure or the dates of the period of time of the illness or misadventure
6. The professional authority’s assessment of the severity of your illness or misadventure and opinion of its likely effect on your capacity to undertake the assessment task/s concerned.

Only documentation that meets the requirements listed above will be accepted.

Please note:

- Items 4 to 6 need to be certified by the provider, e.g. your medical practitioner or other health professional (for illness or injury), or counsellor (for personal or family problems), so you need to make the provider aware of the University's requirements.
- For causes other than sickness, (e.g. road accident, a court hearing, or the death of a relative) written evidence (e.g. a police report, a court summon, or a death certificate) instead of the documentation required in point 6 above is acceptable.
- You must bring the original supporting documentation to Student Central. These documents will be certified and the originals returned to you for your records. Keep the originals of your supporting documentation - once submitted, documents will not be returned.
- The supporting documentation must be submitted to Student Central for verification within 3 working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation. Failure to do so may result in the application being rejected.

Can I use an online doctor service?

Medical certificates submitted for Special Consideration should always be requested from a registered medical practitioner that you have seen at a medical practice. Certificates obtained online or via social media may be fraudulent and if relied upon could result in a breach of the UNSW Student Code.

After application

What happens after I apply?

Details, including the information provided by you, are made available to the relevant course authority/faculty. UNSW’s procedures ensure that the confidentiality of this information is maintained.
On the basis of the information provided in your application, the relevant course authority will decide on the appropriate response in your particular case. The following may be taken into account:

- Your performance in other items of assessment in the course
- The severity of the event and its effect on your performance
- The nature of the assessment in which performance was affected
- Your academic standing and academic progression in other courses and in the program
- Your history of previous applications for special consideration.

What outcomes can I expect?

Special Consideration is primarily intended to provide you with an extra opportunity to demonstrate the level of performance of which you are capable. If Special Consideration is approved, one of the following outcomes are possible:

- A supplementary assessment will be offered to you if you failed the assessment task. This requirement is independent of the weighting of the assessment task; or
- Marks derived from other, completed comparable assessment tasks may be aggregated or averaged to achieve an overall mark if you are unable to complete the assessment task; or
- The deadline for the assessment may be extended.

In the absence of additional assessment, there is no provision for your final mark in a course to be increased even if Special Consideration has been approved.

For enquiries relating to the outcome of your request for Special Consideration, please contact the relevant course authority, or the Head Lecturer for the course.

Examples of common outcomes

The following examples indicate the outcomes you can expect in the most common circumstances. (Many course authorities include similar examples for the special types of assessment used by them in their course information sheets.)

Formal end of Semester examinations

- If you miss such an examination through an illness or other circumstance beyond your control, which are certified as being severe enough to have prevented your attendance, in general you will be granted additional assessment. This is usually in the form of a supplementary examination.
- If you attend an examination but prior to it an illness or other circumstance beyond your control occurs that, because of its duration or severity, is certified as having a significant effect on your preparation for that course, in general you will be granted additional assessment. This is usually in the form of a supplementary examination.

In either of these cases, if you have attained a pass in the course concerned from assessment tasks completed during session, it may not be regarded as necessary to grant you additional assessment.

- If you attend an examination but have an illness on the day, which is either certified as not having a significant effect on your performance (such as a minor head cold), or for which you were examined after the illness had subsided, you will not be granted additional assessment.

Class tests, laboratory examinations, viva voce assessments

The same types of outcomes as outlined above for formal end of session examinations normally will apply for class tests, lab exams and vivas.
Essays, reports, mini-theses, models, creative work, etc.

If an illness or other circumstance beyond your control occurs that, because of its duration or severity, is certified as having a significant effect on your ability to submit the work by the deadline given, you will generally be granted an extension of the deadline. You should not, however, expect the deadline to be extended beyond the period for which the certification is given.

Field work, practical placements, etc.

Each course authority conducting field work, etc. has in place appropriate mechanisms for dealing with consideration for these types of assessments. Details are provided in the relevant course information sheets.

Additional assessment

The timing of any additional assessment granted to you is determined by the course authority concerned. Consult the course information sheet for detailed information about the times and arrangements for the various additional assessment tasks in that course.

Most course authorities conduct supplementary examinations in the period immediately after the formal end-of-semester examination period. For example, for the end of Session 2, supplementary examinations are often held in the 3 weeks just before Christmas. Ensure that you will be available during this period to take any supplementary examination granted to you. Course authorities will provide only one opportunity for you to sit a supplementary examination except, other than in exceptional circumstances.

You should expect any additional assessment granted to you to be of the same degree of difficulty as the original assessment task it replaces.

Need help?

Contact specialconsideration@unsw.edu.au for advice about the policies or procedures relating to special consideration.