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.

The Special Consideration process does not apply to Higher Degree Research Candidates. Research candidates should seek advice directly from their Candidature Management Officer.

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 have a long-term medical or mental health condition, are living with a disability or are the primary carer for someone with a disability, Equitable Learning Services can provide you with ongoing support throughout your studies.

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 FAQs for some of the [common non-applicable circumstances](#).

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More detailed information on applicable circumstances can be found in the [UNSW Application and Assessment Information document](#).

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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.

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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](#).

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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.
Important Information for Online Assessments

Online Exam Preparation Checklist

All students should follow this Online Exam Preparation Checklist prior to their exam or assessment.

Don’t have a suitable study space or computer?

The UNSW Main, Law and Paddington Libraries have opened up a small number of socially distant study spaces which you are currently able to book. Please note that spaces are limited, so it will be important to book in advance. Further information on how to book a study session, as well as opening times is on the UNSW Library website.
During the exam period, the Library also plans to enable reservations on a number of fixed PCs and loanable laptops for those students who require access to a computer. Please continue to check the UNSW Library website for further information regarding this.

**Technical Issues**

If you experience a technical issue that is beyond your control and impacts on your ability to complete an assessment, you should submit a special consideration application (immediately, at the conclusion of your assessment) and upload relevant documentation that clearly demonstrates your circumstances and their impact.

In order to apply, you should:

- Take screenshots of as many of the following as possible:
  - error messages
  - screen not loading
  - timestamped speed tests
  - power outage maps
  - messages or information from your internet provider regarding the issues experienced

All screenshots must include the date and time the issue occurred.

- You must contact the Course Coordinator or Tutor via email, Moodle or chat to advise that you are experiencing a technical issue, as soon as possible.
- 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.

The acceptable formats for supporting documents are pdf, png, gif or doc. The files must be less than 3MB and other file formats, including video files, are not acceptable. If you have more than 3MB of supporting documentation that you would like to include with your application, please submit these directly to specialconsideration@unsw.edu.au after submitting your formal application through myUNSW.

**Computer Updates**

You must ensure that auto-updates are disable on your computer prior to the online assessment.

Special consideration will not be awarded on the grounds that your computer performed an update during an online assessment.

**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.
- You must contact your Course Coordinator or Tutor immediately via email, Moodle or chat 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.
- You must provide a medical certificate dated within 24 hours of the exam, along with screenshots of the conversation you have had with your Course Coordinator or Tutor.

**Time zones**

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If your online assessment is a timed assessment (i.e., scheduled at a specific time in Sydney, 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.

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.

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
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 you 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.

If a student is unsatisfied with the outcome of their appeal, they can further appeal the outcome by following UNSW’s complaints and appeals procedure.
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)
- Computer updating during an online assessment.

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.

What should I do if I am feeling unwell on the day of my exam?
If, before an exam, you feel unwell to the point that you believe you cannot sit the exam, you should follow these steps:

- You must see a medical practitioner and provide a medical certificate dated within 24 hours of the exam
- The medical certificate must cover the exam date
- You must submit a special consideration application within 3 working days of the exam or the period covered by your supporting documentation with the medical certificate attached

**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**

**I'm in a different time zone and my exam is scheduled at very early or late, can I apply for special consideration to sit at an alternative time?**

All exams and assessment items are set to Sydney, Australian Eastern Standard or Daylight Time (AEST/AEDT) and you must make yourself available at the advised time. 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/AEDT.

**I experienced a technical issue during my assessment, what should I do?**

Take screenshots of as many of the following as possible:

- error messages?
- screen not loading?
- time-stamped speed tests?
- power outage maps?
- messages or information from your internet provider regarding the issues experienced

All screenshots *must* include the date and time the issue occurred.

You must contact the Course Coordinator or Tutor via email, Moodle or chat to advise that you are experiencing a technical issue, as soon as possible.

Submit a Special Consideration application immediately at the conclusion of your assessment and upload your screenshots.

**There’s a planned power outage in my area on the day of my exam, what should I do?**

First try to find an alternative location to sit your exam. The UNSW Library is open and students *can* book in and reserve socially distant areas to study in: [https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/about-unsw-library/opening-hours](https://www.library.unsw.edu.au/about-unsw-library/opening-hours) Please note you will be required to bring your own device to complete the task.

If you are unable to find an alternative venue, submit a special consideration application *before* the date of your exam and provide supporting documentation that includes the dates of the planned outage.

**My device ran out of battery during my exam, am I eligible for consideration?**

It is expected that students will be prepared for their assessments, meaning that all devices should be charged and ready.
Not having charged your device before or during your exam is not an acceptable reason for special consideration.

If you had been unable to charge your device prior to or during your assessment or exam due to circumstances beyond your control (ie. technical issue), then this may be considered. You should follow these steps:

Take screenshots of as many of the following as possible:??

- error messages?
- screen not loading?
- time-stamped speed tests??
- power outage maps?
- messages or information from your internet provider regarding the issues experienced

All screenshots must include the date and time the issue occurred.

You must contact the Course Coordinator or Tutor via email, Moodle or chat to advise that you are experiencing a technical issue, as soon as possible.

Submit a Special Consideration application immediately at the conclusion of your assessment and upload your screenshots.

I had issues logging in to my device, which cut into the time for my assessment. What should I do?

If you experienced a technical issue that was beyond your control and impacted on your ability to complete an assessment, you follow these steps:

Take screenshots of as many of the following as possible:??

- error messages?
- screen not loading?
- time-stamped speed tests??
- power outage maps?
- messages or information from your internet provider regarding the issues experienced

All screenshots must include the date and time the issue occurred.

You must contact the Course Coordinator or Tutor via email, Moodle or chat to advise that you are experiencing a technical issue, as soon as possible.
Submit a Special Consideration application immediately at the conclusion of your assessment and upload your screenshots.

**My computer started updating during the?assessment?**

You must ensure that auto-updates are disabled on your computer prior to the online assessment.

Special consideration will not be awarded on the grounds that your computer updated during your online assessment.

**I did not save my work and I lost my file(s)**

It is expected that students will save their work regularly, therefore this would not be an acceptable reason for special consideration.

**I accidentally uploaded the incorrect file(s) when submitting my answers**

Students are responsible for checking their work before uploading, therefore uploading the incorrect file(s) would not be an acceptable reason for special consideration.