Difference Between Special Consideration and Educational Adjustments

It is important to understand the difference between applying for Special Consideration while at university and having educational adjustments in place. They are not the same thing.

During your university education you may experience a major event in your life that prevents you from completing your course assessment or sitting your exams. These significant events, such as illness, the death of a family member or a serious accident are called ‘misadventures’.

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

Any student may apply to have their circumstances taken into account under UNSW's Special Consideration policy. Each case is individually reviewed and assessed and if your application is successful, you may be given some flexibility to meet your course requirements - for example, you may be allowed to sit your exams at a later date.

See how to apply for Special Consideration

You must submit a form for Special Consideration and provide documentation that outlines your situation and supports your application. There is a time limit on when applications will be accepted after the illness or misadventure occurs (usually within three days), so it is important to submit your application as soon as possible.

If you would like additional support in submitting your Special Consideration Application, study planning, goal setting or time management assistance contact an Educational Support Advisor.

Frequently asked questions

Below you will find some answers to commonly asked questions for registered students. If you have any further questions please contact us for a confidential discussion.

1. What is Special Consideration?

Special Consideration is a process available for students in cases of sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control, which 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.

If your application for Special Consideration is not related to your disability, then you should apply via MyUNSW, and then submit your original medical documentation to Student Central within 3 days for verification.

2. What should I do when my Special Consideration application is related to the impact of a disability or medical condition?
Students registered with Disability Services may experience illnesses related to their disability, which are potentially eligible for Special Consideration, such as:

- An exacerbation of your disability
- Unexpected treatment or hospitalisation
- Increased caring demands for a person with a disability.

If you are concerned about disclosing personal medical information when applying for Special Consideration, the Disabilities Services Unit may be able to provide you with a generic supporting letter stating relevant information to upload with your application. Alternatively you may submit an application directly through myUNSW with your supporting documentation. However, if you apply directly through MyUNSW details will be required.

To receive a Cover Letter from Disability Services for special consideration you must:

- Provide a professional authority form, or similar supporting medical documentation completed by your clinician, to your Disability Advisor. Supporting medical documentation should provide evidence of your circumstances from your treating clinician which outlines what occurred, when, the impact on your ability to study and the duration of the impact. This evidence should be given to your Disability Advisor.
- On receipt of the information from your treating clinician, your Disability Advisor will provide you with a letter which provides key information such as the dates your ability to study was impacted, but it will not contain any personal medical information.
- You then need to apply for special consideration via myUNSW and must upload the letter provided to you by your Disability Advisor, as your supporting documentation with your application.

Please refer to the Disability Services Request for Special Consideration page for more detail around Special Consideration when it is related to your disability or medical condition and you are registered with Disability Services:

3. What to do if your educational adjustments do not cover you?

Your educational adjustments, as per your Letter of Support, are the agreed adjustment plan for the semester. If your disability or medical conditions worsens, and even with your adjustments you are unable to complete assessment, you should apply for special consideration.