Student Services and Systems

Special Consideration (Exceptional Circumstances)
Application and Assessment Information for Students

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1. Eligibility Criteria

1.1. Applicable Circumstances

A student’s circumstance is considered exceptional if it is short-term, serious and unavoidable if it arises from circumstances that:

- Were unexpected and beyond the students control and;
- Caused disturbance to academic work by a substantial degree and;
- Could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against by the student and either;
  - Occurred during an event critical study period and was 3 consecutive days or more duration or a total of 5 days within the critical study period or;
  - Prevented the ability to complete, attend or submit an assessment task for a specific date (e.g. final exam, in class test/quiz, in class presentation)

Life events (such as births, deaths and weddings)

While supporting documentation for special consideration need to outline clear periods of impact, we understand that life events such as birth or the death of a loved one, will impact you for longer than your documentation may be able to outline. These situations are assessed on a case by case basis and factor in other criteria such as recency of the event and impact on ability to complete assessments.

Life events such as weddings that can be expected and anticipated may be considered for assessments that are held in person on the same day but are unlikely to be considered for assessments such as assignments where students can plan for this event occurring.

Online Assessments

Students who experience a technical or connection problem during an online assessment, need to do the following steps in order to apply for special consideration:

- 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 the assessment and upload the screenshots.

Time zones

If the online assessment is a timed assessment (ie: scheduled at a specific time – Australian Eastern Standard Time, AEST), students must make themselves available at the time advised.

Special Consideration will not be awarded on the grounds that the student is in a different time zone and that either:

- the assessment is at an inconvenient time for the student’s time zone, or
- for failure to realise an exam is being conducted at AEST.
1.2. Time Frames for Applying for Consideration

Applications must be submitted prior to the start of the exam or before the assessment is due, except where illness or misadventure prevent a student from doing so.

Where misadventure has prevented a student from submitting or sitting for an assessment, applications must be made within three working days of the assessment or the period covered by the supporting documentation.

1.3. Fit to sit/submit

On the 14 February 2019, the fit to sit/submit rule was included in the Assessment Implementation Procedure.

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

Students are responsible for deciding in advance of an assessment start time or due date whether they are unwell or facing significant circumstances which will impact their performance in the assessment.

A student who becomes unwell during an examination can request Special Consideration if they notify the Course Coordinator or Tutor and provide a medical certificate dated within 24 hours of the examination.

Exceptions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis where it is clear that a student was unfit to make reasonable judgement on their fitness to undertake the assessment, due to mental illness or other extenuating circumstances.

1.4. Supporting Evidence for Applications

Applications must be supported by documentation that indicates clearly that the student was unable to comply. Please refer to Appendix 3.1 and 3.2 for additional information on medical certificate requirements.

The evidence must:

- Identify the circumstances
- Include dates and/or length of circumstances
- Explain severity and impact of the circumstances
- Clearly describe how circumstances have adversely affected the student’s capacity for effective study to which an assessment relates
- Include the date(s) on which the student was seen by the professional providing the evidence

The table below lists common applicable circumstances and supporting evidence that may be supplied, however this list is not exhaustive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exceptional Circumstance</th>
<th>Supporting Evidence Required - Suggested</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Short-term illness</td>
<td>• Medical Certificate (provided by health practitioner, see Appendix 3.1) or</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hospital Discharge Certificate</td>
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<td>2. Hardship or trauma, including:</td>
<td>• Official letter from relevant source/authority or</td>
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<td>• Sudden change in domestic arrangements: e.g. eviction, homelessness</td>
<td>• Police report</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unexpected serious financial difficulties</td>
<td>• Medical Certificate (provided by health practitioner, see Appendix 3.1) or</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Victims of crime</td>
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<td>Version: 1.2   Effective April 2020</td>
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</tbody>
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| • Unexpected events/accidents  
• Hospitalisation of a family member | • Hospital Discharge Certificate |
| --- | --- |

**3. Death of a relative or friend**
- • Death Notice/Certificate  
- • Obituary  
- • Order of service  
- • Statutory Declaration

| 4. Unavoidable commitments  
• University Competitions  
• Religious commitments  
• Unavoidable medical procedures  
• Court dates/Jury Duty  
• Unexpected carers requirements  
• Exams held at another University  
• Internship or graduate interviews  
• UNSW approved internships | • Letter from UNSW competition owner confirming support of attendance at competition  
• Letter from religious leader/Elder  
• Medical Certificate (provided by health practitioner, see Appendix 3.1)  
• Letter confirming attendance to Jury Duty/court date  
• Carers requirements list  
• Letter from other University confirming exam schedule  
• Evidence of interview  
• Letter from internship host confirming internships dates and their unwillingness to be flexible in start dates or allowing time off to attend university examinations |

| 5. Exacerbation of ongoing illness | • Medical Certificate (provided by health practitioner, see Appendix 3.1) |

| 6. Elite athletes or Performers  
• Students part of UNSW Elite Athlete Program  
• Students representing UNSW/State/Australia at a competition  
• Faculty supported competitions | • Letter from club or team manager outlining competition dates or increased training commitments  
• Letter from club or competition owner confirming competition dates  
• Letter from Faculty ADE confirming support of attendance at Faculty competition |

| 7. Army Reservists/SES commitments and Volunteer Firefighters | • An official training notice from organiser explaining why attendance is required |

| 8. Life Events  
• Births  
• Weddings | • Invitation to wedding  
• Birth certificate  
• Hospital admission/discharge papers  
• Medical Certificate (provided by health practitioner, see Appendix 3.1) |
| 9. Technical issue during an online assessment | • Screenshot(s) of the issue experienced (see in detail in ‘Online Assessments’ above) and • Screenshot(s) of communication with Course Coordinator or Tutor |

1.5. Non-Applicable Circumstances

The University does not provide special consideration for conditions or circumstances that are the consequence of a student’s own actions or inactions.

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

- misreading the unit guide;
- 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;
- overloading with additional courses in the given term;
- two or more assessments due on the same date;
- work commitments (unless unexpected and unavoidable)
2. Appeal and Reassessments

2.1. Reassessments

Students can request a reassessment of a special consideration application via email if:

- It is no longer than 3 business days since the outcome of an application was received AND
- The student is able to provide additional supporting documentation and/or information to support their application

2.2. Appeals

If a student is unsatisfied with the outcome of an application they can appeal the outcome by sending an email to specialconsideration@unsw.edu.au
3. Appendix

3.1. Registered Health Professionals

Registered health professionals are those registered with a National Board of Australia that is accredited by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice
- Chinese Medicine
- Chiropractic
- Dental
- Medical
- Medical Radiation Practice
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry
- Osteopathy
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Psychology

Documentation relating to health circumstances will also be accepted from other professionals such as counsellors and social workers.

The eligibility of documentation that has been backdated by the issuing health professional will be assessed on a case by case basis.

3.2. Online Medical Certificates

In accordance with the Australian Medical Association’s (AMA) guidance, online medical certificates provided as a result of technology-based patient consultations are an appropriate alternative to consulting with a patient in the same physical room, when they are used:

- as an adjunct to normal medical practice;
- for regular patients of the practice;
- for patients who have been referred by another medical practitioner; and
- when it is clinically appropriate for the patient’s circumstances.

UNSW will accept online medical certificates if:

- it is evident that a tele-health consultation was necessary and appropriate in the given circumstances, based on the criteria listed above;
- it was provided by an AHPRA registered provider; and
- it can be confirmed that the service was provided as a Tele-Health Service e.g. through Skype, FaceTime etc.

All online medical certificates submitted as part of an application will be verified as part of the process to confirm their appropriateness and authenticity.

3.3. Additional Support Services

The following additional support services are available for students at UNSW:

- **Counselling services** - UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services [CAPS] are available Monday to Friday to help students while they are residing in Australia. [https://student.unsw.edu.au/counselling](https://student.unsw.edu.au/counselling)

- **Medical and Health Services** - [https://student.unsw.edu.au/health](https://student.unsw.edu.au/health)
• **Student Support Advisors** - work with all students to promote the development of skills needed to succeed at university, whilst also providing personal support throughout the process - [https://student.unsw.edu.au/advisors](https://student.unsw.edu.au/advisors)

• **Equitable Learning Services** - if you anticipate your circumstances may be ongoing, you may wish to consider if having educational adjustments put in place will assist you in managing your circumstances and studies simultaneously - [https://student.unsw.edu.au/els](https://student.unsw.edu.au/els)