

Name:	SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY
Policy No:	PP3117
Approved by:	ACER Academic Board
Last reviewed:	August 2018
Responsible Division/ Department	Professional Resources Division/ ACER Institute

1. Purpose

The purpose of Special Consideration is to enable Students to maintain their academic progress despite unexpected and/or adverse circumstances.

2. Scope

This policy applies to Staff Members and Students.

3. Definitions

See [Glossary of Terms](#)

Special Consideration (sometimes referred to as ‘academic consideration’) is a process developed to assist Students when serious or extenuating circumstances beyond their control impact on their ability to complete an Assessment Task or meet Course or Unit progression requirements.

4. Legislation and Related Documents

[Australian Qualifications Framework \(AQF\) 2nd edn. \(Jan 2013\)](#)

Disability Discrimination Act – [Education Standards 2005](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)

[ACER Student Policies.](#)

5. Policy Principles

5.1 All Students have the right to equity and fairness when undertaking Assessment Tasks and Examinations as part of their studies.

5.2 Granting of Special Consideration maintains a Student’s academic progress without compromising the academic integrity of ACER’s Courses and Units.

5.3 Special Consideration can be sought for the following:

- i. An extension of time to submit an Assessment Task;
- ii. Permission to undertake a supplementary (alternative or replacement) Assessment Task or Examination;
- iii. Late withdrawal from a Course or Unit without academic penalty;
- iv. Consideration in marking a particular Assessment Task.

6. Grounds for Special Consideration

- i. Exceptional circumstances justifying special consideration may arise from physical or psychological trauma, other medical conditions, events or accidents, compassionate circumstances, serious unforeseen personal events, and severe disruption to a relationship or domestic arrangements.
- ii. Extenuating circumstances warranting special consideration may arise from unplanned carer responsibilities, religious obligations, legal commitments, timetable clashes, military service, one-off unusual work commitments, emergency service commitments, selection in state, national or international sporting or cultural events, or unforeseen events, such as natural disasters.
- iii. Special Consideration will not be granted on grounds such as routine family or work commitments, clashes with recreational activities or holidays, lack of preparation for Assessment Tasks or Examinations, stress and anxiety normally associated with Assessment Tasks or Examinations, or academic workload and/or professional experience requirements.

7. Application for Special Consideration

- i. Students are eligible to apply for special consideration when exceptional and/or extenuating circumstances affect their ability to meet Course or Unit requirements.
- ii. Applications shall normally be made in advance of the due date of the Assessment Task. Exemptions may be made for late application in exceptional cases – for example, where a Student is hospitalised or in a situation where she/he cannot make contact with ACER or rely on anyone else to make contact on her/his behalf.
- iii. Applications for special consideration must be made an Application for Special Consideration Form and submitted to the Course Coordinator along with appropriate and relevant supporting documentation.
- iv. Applications without supporting documentation will not be considered.
- v. The purpose of documentation is to demonstrate and verify the severity and/or gravity and timing of the circumstance/event.

7.1.1 If an application is sought on medical grounds, a certificate from a registered health care provider is required, which indicates:

- i. Name of Student;
- ii. Date the certificate was written and signed.
- iii. Date on which the health care provider considers the Student is likely to return to studies.
- iv. Be addressed to the Course Coordinator.

7.1.2 If an application is sought on compassionate grounds, documentation may include:

- i. Notification or letter from a medical professional or registered psychologist.

- ii. Death certificate or death notice, and, if relationship with deceased is not obvious, a Statutory Declaration indicating relationship, or notification or letter from a medical professional in the case of serious illness of a close family member.
- iii. Police report plus a Statutory Declaration indicating relevance.
- iv. Letter from a minister of religion (or the like) on relevant letterhead.
- v. Letter from an employer on company letterhead.

7.1.3 If an application is sought on the grounds of extenuating circumstances, documentation may include:

- i. Notification or letter from a registered psychologist.
- ii. Letter from a minister of religion (or the like) on relevant letterhead.
- iii. Jury notice or letter from relevant authority on relevant letterhead.
- iv. Police report plus a Statutory Declaration indicating relevance.
- v. Satisfactory written evidence from the armed forces or emergency services, on relevant letterhead.
- vi. Letter from an employer on company letterhead.
- vii. Selection confirmation on the letterhead of the state, national or international sporting body.
- viii. Letter from a relevant cultural authority on relevant letterhead.

8. Guidelines for Applications for Special Consideration

- i. Applications must be made on the Application for Consideration Form and include the supporting documentation as outlined in Section 6.
- ii. Medical Certificates are legal documents and cannot be backdated or altered.
- iii. Applications for Special Consideration should be lodged via mail or email to the Course Coordinator. All staff who deal with Special Consideration applications are required to maintain confidentiality of information presented by Students.
- iv. Special Consideration should not be used repetitively in order to manage long-term illness, disabilities, or ongoing severe disruptive circumstances. Students affected by these circumstances should contact ACER's Student support services.
- v. If it is not possible to obtain supporting documentation, Students should seek advice from the Staff Member in charge of the Course or Unit before lodging the application. The Staff Member may refer the student to the Course Coordinator, or deal with the matter directly by advising the Student to prepare a Statutory Declaration which states in detail the facts upon which academic consideration is based, and to attach whatever documentation is available to support the statements made in the declaration.
- vi. Students should receive a response to their application for Special Consideration within 48 hours of the application being received.

9. Special Consideration Decisions

9.1 The following may be taken into account when making decisions:

- The severity of the event;
- Previous academic performance including contribution to online community
- History of previous applications for Special Consideration.

9.2 Possible outcomes may include:

- No action - a full reason will be supplied;
- An extension of time to complete the Course or Unit;
- A supplementary (alternative or replacement) Assessment Task;
- Special consideration when marking;
- Withdrawal without failure on compassionate grounds.

9.3 Students may appeal against special consideration decisions. Special consideration appeals must be made in writing to the Director and lodged within 10 working days of the decision.

10. Awareness of Policy

The Director will take reasonable steps to disseminate and explain this policy to Staff Members and Students who may be affected by it.

The policy will be available online at: <https://www.acer.org/professional-learning/postgraduate/students/policies>.

11. Version Control

Authorised by: ACER Academic Board
Maintained by: Director, ACER Institute
Written: March 2013
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Version Control	Date effective	Amendments by	Amendment
1.	2/03//2013	E Hartnell-Young	Logo, Page Numbers, Scope
2.	29/03/2013	C. Kemp	Formatting
3.	12/11/2015	G. Appleby	Definitions, Purpose, Scope, Guidelines for Application for Special Consideration, Awareness of Policy, Version Control details, formatting.

4	17/8/2016	P. Taylor-Guy	<p>Updated purpose. Added principles. Added legislation and relevant documents as section 5, to be consistent with other Policies Reviewed and updated grounds for special consideration. Clarification added into applications purpose, and guidelines sections. Added to section 8 (now section 9) – decisions and possible outcome. Remove table of Definitions and add link. Update Legislation and Related Documents. Update Version Control</p>
5	1/8/2018	P. Taylor-Guy	<p>Checked links Updated version control Minor edits</p>