

Special Consideration Policy

Section 1 - purpose

(1) The Special Consideration Policy applies in all cases where academic policies provide for a student to seek some entitlement on the grounds of misadventure or extenuating circumstances. It is a formal process with stringent requirements, and should not be conflated with other processes at Charles Sturt University for review of marks and grades or ordinary variations to assessment requirements.

Section 2 - Glossary

(2) Nil.

Section 3 - Policy

(3) Students are expected to complete all compulsory assessment tasks, tests and examinations at an acceptable standard and to meet all compulsory assessment deadlines to meet course requirements.

(4) Students who suffer misadventure or are affected by extenuating circumstances which prevents them from meeting acceptable standards or deadlines, may apply for special consideration.

(5) Students who experience circumstances which adversely affect their studies but which are not such as to be deemed misadventure or extenuating circumstances as defined below, are nevertheless advised to inform their subject coordinator, Course Director or Course Coordinator of those circumstances as they occur.

Part A - Misadventure and Extenuating Circumstances

(6) As a general guide misadventure or extenuating circumstances are circumstances which:

- a. are beyond the student's control (i.e. they could not have reasonably been anticipated, avoided or guarded against);
- b. are sufficiently grave or of a nature or duration to have caused considerable disruption to the student's capacity to study effectively or to complete subject requirements; and
- c. have interfered with the otherwise satisfactory fulfilment of the subject requirements.

Misadventure

(7) Circumstances contributing to misadventure can include:

- a. medical reasons;
- b. family/personal reasons - including death or severe medical or personal problems; and/or
- c. employment related reasons - such as a substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status.

(8) The following circumstances would not be considered misadventure:

- a. routine demands of employment;
- b. difficulties adjusting to University life, to the self discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;
- c. stress or anxiety normally associated with examinations, required assessment tasks or any aspect of course work;
- d. routine need for financial support; or
- e. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work.

Extenuating Circumstances

(9) Circumstances which can be deemed to be extenuating include:

- a. administrative problems - such as the late receipt of teaching materials, enrolment errors or delays;
- b. representative commitments - where a student has been selected to participate in a state, national or international level event such as sports, arts, culture, academic, religious or civil events;
- c. military commitments - where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise;
- d. legal commitments - where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal, etc.; and/or
- e. other events that pose a major obstacle to the student proceeding satisfactorily with his or her studies.

(10) The following would not be regarded as extenuating circumstances:

- a. demands of sport, clubs, and social or extra-curricular activity (other than selection for state, national or international events); and
- b. language background other than English.

Section 4 - Procedures

(11) Requests for special consideration may be lodged for the purposes given below. The type of application, the office with which it should be lodged and the deadline for lodging it are specified in each case.

An Extension of Time to Submit Assessment Tasks

(12) Applications for an extension of time to submit assessment tasks are the subject of policies specified in subject outlines. Such applications may be received and approved verbally. Where a written application is required, the following applies:

- a. applications should be in writing to the subject coordinator and should be supported by appropriate documentation. The application should be lodged as soon as it becomes apparent that the submission deadline cannot be met.

Approved Withdrawal from a Subject (AW Grade) After the HECS Census Date

(13) Applications for Approved Withdrawal from a subject must be lodged as soon as possible after the occurrence of the extenuating circumstances or misadventure. Where the application is submitted before grades have been released for the subject, they should be made on the [Special Consideration Request form](#). Applications submitted after grades have been released for the subject must be made on a [Review of Grade application form - DSA](#) and will be subject to approved University policy and procedure for Review of Grade.

Refund of HECS-HELP Payments Following Withdrawal from a Subject/s

(14) Applications for a refund of HECS-HELP payments following withdrawal from a subject must be in writing to the Division of Student Administration. The application must be lodged within one year of the notification of the granting of an AW grade. Refer to the [Enrolment Policy](#).

Extended Leave of Absence

(15) Applications for leave of absence which do not exceed the maximum leave permitted (four sessions of leave in any four consecutive calendar years) are normally automatically granted. All applications for leave must be in writing but applications for leave beyond the maximum permitted must be on the grounds of misadventure or extenuating circumstances.

(16) Applications for extended leave should be lodged with the Division of Student Administration by 5:00 pm on the census date of the session in which leave is sought. Refer to the [Enrolment Policy](#).

An Extension of Time to Complete a Subject (Grade Pending GP)

(17) Applications for an extension of time to complete a subject must be lodged on the [Special Consideration Request form](#) with the Division of Student Administration by the Friday before the commencement of examinations for the session. Late applications may be accepted if the misadventure or extenuating circumstances prevented the student from lodging the application on time. Refer to the Assessment Policy.

Permission to Sit for a Supplementary Examination

Due to Inability to Sit for the Final Examination

(18) Applications shall be made on a [Special Consideration Request form](#) , before the commencement of examinations for the session. Late applications may be accepted if the misadventure or extenuating circumstances prevented the student from lodging the application on time. Refer to the [Assessment Policy - Coursework Subjects](#).

Due to Misadventure at an Examination

(19) Applications shall be made on a [Special Consideration Request form](#).

(20) Refer to the [Assessment Policy - Coursework Subjects](#).

Exemption from Attendance at a Compulsory Residential School

(21) Applications must be submitted via the online [Special Consideration Request form](#). Refer to the [Assessment Policy - Coursework Subjects](#).

Section 5 - Supporting Documentary Evidence

Medical Certificates and Reports

Medical Certificates

(22) A medical certificate, in the form prescribed by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration, or other formal documentation from a health care provider as below, must be submitted by a student who has suffered an acute (i.e. brief) illness when seeking special consideration. A medical certificate is a signed statement from a qualified and registered health practitioner which explains the debilitating nature of the condition from which the

student is or was suffering and the period during which the condition has or will affect the student, so that the University can decide on the basis of that information and any other information provided by the student, whether to grant the special consideration sought. The certificate should also specify the precise nature of the medical condition, unless to do so would result in a breach of patient confidentiality.

Medical Reports

(23) A medical report will normally be submitted by a student when seeking to explain poor academic performance over an extended period of time as in the case of an exclusion appeal. A medical report is a signed statement from a qualified and registered health practitioner which explains the debilitating nature of the chronic (i.e. ongoing) medical condition from which the student is or was suffering and the likely duration of the condition, so that the University can decide on the basis of that information and any other information provided by the student, whether to grant the special consideration sought. The report should also specify the precise nature of the medical condition, unless to do so would result in a breach of patient confidentiality.

Conditions Relating to the Use of Medical Reports and Certificates

(24) Medical certificates must be completed in the form prescribed by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration. Where other documentation from a health care provider is used, it must contain the information required by the Charles Sturt University medical certificate, including the impact of the condition upon the ability of a student to complete the subject. These certificate requirements protect the integrity of the process, to maximise fairness for all students and staff.

(25) Medical certificates and medical reports will only be accepted when given by qualified and registered health practitioners.

(26) Medical certificates and medical reports must be legible documents, signed by the practitioner, and preferably on letterhead stationery; they must indicate the date/s on which attention was sought; and meet the other requirements specified above.

(27) A student shall submit a medical certificate or medical report when seeking special consideration in relation to an illness, disability or medical condition.

(28) When assessing a request for special consideration, the University will take into account all matters relevant to the request. A medical certificate or medical report, in itself, does not guarantee that special consideration will be granted.

Registered Health Practitioners

(29) Medical reports and certificates, in the form prescribed by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration, will be accepted from the following categories of registered health practitioners:

- a. registered medical practitioners; and
- b. registered dentists.

Family/Personal

(30) For family/personal reasons - a statement from a registered health care practitioner, a recognised mental health professional, or a person who knows the student, who is not related to the student and who is independent of the University stating:

- a. the date the student's personal circumstances began or changed; and
- b. how these circumstances affected the student's ability to study.

Employment

(31) For employment related reasons - a statement from the student's employer stating:

- a. the date employment arrangements or status changed; and
- b. the nature of the changes.

Sporting/Cultural/Military/Legal

(32) For sporting, cultural, military or legal commitments - a statement from the relevant authority advising:

- a. details of the event; and
- b. the period during which the student's study will be interrupted.

Section 6 - Guidelines

Staff Assessing Special Consideration Requests

(33) Members of staff who are required to determine a request for special consideration which has been lodged in accordance with this Policy (which outlines the purposes for which requests may be lodged and the procedures for lodging such a request) should apply the following criteria when making the determination:

- a. the actual impact of the applicant's reasons for requesting special consideration on his/her capacity to complete one or more specific subject or course requirements:
 - i. whether the applicant's reasons for seeking consideration would affect his or her ability to achieve a pass or higher grade in the relevant subject/course if special consideration were not granted;
 - ii. the extent to which the circumstances leading to the request were beyond the applicant's control and the extent to which the applicant contributed to the circumstances; and
 - iii. whether the special consideration being sought would in any way unfairly advantage the applicant against other students enrolled in the subject/course.

(34) Staff should ensure that requests for special consideration would not more appropriately be redirected to processes such as reviews of marks or grades, or extensions of deadlines for assignments etc.

(35) When staff approve a request for special consideration, under no circumstances does this lead to a change of mark or grade of the original work, unless the outcome of the special consideration request is that a formal review of mark or grade is allowed, using the formal review procedures described in the Assessment Policy - Coursework Subjects.

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