

# Assessment Flexibility Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

- (1) This procedure supports the [Assessment Policy](#) by stating detailed requirements for reasonable adjustments to assessment to accommodate disability, extensions of time on deadlines to submit assessment work, special consideration, deferred exams and alternative exam arrangements.
- (2) Its purpose is to provide reasonable flexibility to support students to continue to make academic progress when they encounter a range of life circumstances.
- (3) The [Assessment - Conduct of Coursework Assessment and Examinations Procedure](#) states detailed requirements for further assessment where a student has:
- marginally failed a subject; or
  - gained an overall pass mark in a subject but failed an assessment task they must pass to pass the subject.

### Scope

- (4) This procedure applies to assessment in coursework subjects and research component subjects for coursework courses. Within that scope restriction, it applies to the same range of staff and students as the [Assessment Policy](#).
- (5) The [Higher Degree by Research Policy](#) states requirements for assessment flexibility in research component subjects in higher degree by research courses.

### References

- (6) Where a supporting document is referred to in this procedure, it will be listed in the associated information tab.

## Section 2 - Glossary

- (7) The terms used in this procedure are defined in the glossary section of the [Assessment Policy](#).

## Section 3 - Policy

- (8) This procedure supports the [Assessment Policy](#) and should be read alongside it.

## Section 4 - Procedure

### Reasonable adjustments for disability for in-session assessment tasks

- (9) The University will provide reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks for students who:
- are living with a disability or a long-term physical, medical, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and mental health conditions; or

- b. have ongoing carer responsibility for an immediate family member who is living with a disability or a long-term physical or mental health condition.

(10) The process by which students may request alternative arrangements for in-session tests is set out in the section on 'Alternative exam arrangements' at the end of this procedure.

(11) The Subject Coordinator is responsible for providing reasonable adjustments for other types of in-session assessment, in consultation with the Head of School as needed.

(12) Students who require reasonable adjustments are expected to:

- a. register with the Disability Services; and
- b. provide documentation from a registered health professional describing their disability or health condition and its effects on their study and assessment work,

so that the Disability Services can develop a study access plan for the student and the student can provide this to the teaching school.

(13) Students must register with the Disability Services and inform Subject Coordinators of their study access plan early enough that there is reasonable time for the Subject Coordinator to provide any adjustments that are needed.

### **Extensions of deadlines for submitting assessment work**

(14) The [Assessment Policy](#) states that a student may ask the relevant Subject Coordinator for an extension of up to seven days of the deadline for an assignment, where unexpected circumstances are likely to prevent them from meeting the deadline.

(15) Such requests must be submitted in writing:

- a. as soon as the student realises the need for an extension; and
- b. before the original deadline for submission of the work.

(16) The Subject Coordinator has discretion to grant the request without supporting documents.

- a. Where the Subject Coordinator, school or faculty decides that all requests for extensions in a subject must be submitted through the online special consideration process, the subject outline must state this requirement.

(17) Alternatively, the Subject Coordinator may require the student to submit the request using the online special consideration request form, which will require them to attach supporting documents as explained in the 'Special consideration' section below.

### **Special consideration**

#### **Eligibility for special consideration**

(18) The [Assessment Policy](#) states the purposes of special consideration and the types of circumstance for which it may be available. As well as being available for short-term illness or injury, unexpected carer responsibilities or unexpected, unavoidable employment commitments, special consideration may be available where students have other unexpected commitments or adverse circumstances outside their control.

(19) The [Student Misconduct Rule](#), however, states that a penalty for academic misconduct of a reduced assessment mark, reduced subject grade or fail in an assessment task or a subject, overrules other assessment decisions such as special consideration decisions.

(20) Some circumstances that are considered unexpected, unavoidable commitments or adverse circumstances outside the student's control are:

- a. unexpected loss of employment or unexpected, unavoidable employment commitments;
- b. unavoidable workplace learning commitments;
- c. death of a family member;
- d. administrative delays on the part of the University such as late provision of teaching materials, enrolment errors or delay in completing or changing a student's enrolment;
- e. being called for jury duty or subpoenaed to attend a court or tribunal;
- f. the student being selected to participate in a state, national or international sporting, artistic, cultural, academic, religious or civil event; or
- g. being required to participate in Defence Reserves activities.

(21) The following circumstances are not considered unexpected or outside the student's control:

- a. the student's normal employment commitments;
- b. difficulties adjusting to the demands of academic work;
- c. poor English language skills;
- d. stress or anxiety normally associated with assessment tasks;
- e. lack of knowledge of the assessment task requirements;
- f. misreading an exam timetable, exam centre selection or assessment deadline; and
- g. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity other than selection for state, national or international events.

### **Applications for special consideration**

(22) Students must apply for special consideration, using the online special consideration request form, where:

- a. they are seeking a resit or deferred sitting of a test or faculty-run exam;
- b. they are seeking an alternative assessment task;
- c. they are seeking rescheduling of or an alternative arrangement for a practical learning activity or workplace learning that will be assessed later;
- d. they are seeking an extension of the deadline for submission of an assignment, and:
  - i. the Subject Coordinator has asked them to apply using the special consideration form; or
  - ii. the extension will be more than seven days;
- e. they are seeking a deferred exam (DX); or
- f. they are seeking an approved withdrawal (AW).

(23) A student should apply for special consideration as soon as reasonably possible after they become aware of the adverse circumstances or unexpected commitment for which they need special consideration.

(24) Where a student's circumstances worsen, they may apply again for special consideration.

### **Applications for special consideration to be granted a deferred exam**

(25) To be granted a deferred exam, a student must apply for special consideration:

- a. as soon as possible after the illness or adverse circumstances arise, and no later than three working days after the exam date (unless the circumstances prevent them from submitting the application sooner);

- b. using the online special consideration request form; and
- c. must attach documents from a third party confirming the date of the circumstance and/or the date(s) of its impact.

(26) The following rules ensure that granting a deferred exam to a student will not unfairly advantage them over other students.

- a. Where a student is granted a deferred exam, but then sits the original exam that the deferred exam was to replace:
  - i. the student has in effect decided that they are fit to sit the original exam; so
  - ii. the grant of the deferred exam is annulled and the student will receive the mark for the exam they have chosen to sit.
- b. Where a student begins sitting an exam but leaves the exam early because of adverse circumstances such as illness, they must apply for special consideration to be granted a deferred exam.
- c. Where a student applies for a deferred exam but the outcome is not issued before the original exam is held, and the student sits the exam:
  - i. their original application for special consideration will be annulled; and
  - ii. they will receive the mark for the exam they have sat; but
  - iii. if the student believes that their performance in the exam was impaired by their adverse circumstances, they can apply for consideration of this through the review of grade process: see the [Assessment - Grades and Review of Grades Procedure](#).
- d. Where a student sits an exam and does not leave early, they are considered to have decided that they are fit to sit the exam and no application for special consideration to have a deferred exam in the subject will be considered.

### Supporting documents

(27) To have their request for special consideration considered, the student must provide the following types of supporting document, for the following types of circumstance.

Circumstance	Document
Short-term mental or physical illness, or exacerbation of an existing medical or mental health condition	A signed medical certificate from a registered professional in a relevant health profession, giving the impact of the illness and the date(s) of impact. The student should ask the health professional to complete and sign the Charles Sturt University student medical certificate, which will provide the full set of information for the decision-maker. However, a health professional's own medical certificate may also be accepted if it provides enough information. To enable the University to provide flexibility appropriate to the nature of the student's illness, the certificate should if possible state the nature of the illness.
Family/personal circumstances	A statement from a registered health professional or from a person who knows the student but is not related to them. The statement must include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the date the circumstances began or changed; and</li> <li>b. how the circumstances affected the student's ability to undertake assessment tasks.</li> </ul>
Unexpected, unavoidable employment commitments	A statement on letterhead, from the student's employer, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. the date the student's employment commitments or employment status changed; and</li> <li>b. the nature of the changes.</li> </ul>
Sporting, cultural, military or legal commitments	A statement on letterhead from the relevant body, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. details of the event; and</li> <li>b. the period of interruption of the student's study.</li> </ul>

Circumstance	Document
Attendance at a Defence Reserves camp or training course, or being called up for full-time Defence Reserves service	A statement on letterhead from an officer of the Defence Reserves stating the dates and times when attendance is required.

### Special consideration decisions and outcomes

(28) The [Assessment Policy](#) states the process and decision-makers for decisions on a student's request for special consideration to have:

- a. an extension or other flexibility in relation to an in-session assessment task, such that the assessment task will be completed by the last day of the exam period at the end of the relevant session;
- b. a deferred exam; or
- c. an extension of time or other flexibility in relation to an in-session assessment task, such that the assessment task will be completed after the last day of the exam period at the end of the relevant session.

(29) Where a special consideration application seeks flexibility in relation to a workplace learning placement, the decision-maker will make the decision in consultation with the relevant Sub Dean (Workplace Learning).

(30) The online special consideration system will automatically notify the student of the decision.

(31) Where the special consideration request is granted:

- a. where the outcome is an approved withdrawal, an AW grade will automatically be recorded for the student in the subject; or
- b. a GP (grade pending) or DX (deferred exam granted) administrative grade will automatically be recorded for the student in the subject; and, as relevant, either:
  - i. the Subject Coordinator will advise the student via the online special consideration functionality of any work they must complete and the deadline by which they must submit it for assessment; or
  - ii. the online special consideration functionality will inform the student that they have been granted a deferred exam, and the Examinations Office will notify the student of the deferred exam details.

### Criteria for deciding special consideration applications

(32) Decision-makers should apply the following criteria when considering a student's request for special consideration:

- a. the impact of the student's circumstances on their ability to complete the assessment task(s);
- b. whether the circumstances were beyond the student's control and/or the extent to which the student contributed to the circumstances;
- c. whether the circumstances will prevent the student from gaining a pass or a higher grade if special consideration is not granted; or
- d. whether granting special consideration would enable the student to demonstrate their achievement on an equal basis with other students in the subject.

### Refund of fees and/or remission of debt after approved withdrawal

(33) Students who have been granted special consideration with the outcome of an approved withdrawal without failure (AW) may apply for a refund of their Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) student contribution/tuition fees and/or remission of HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP debt.

(34) For refund and remission to be granted, an application must be assessed as meeting the criteria for remission stated in the [Higher Education Support Act](#).

(35) As stated in the [Enrolment Procedure](#), the student must apply for these refunds and/or remissions to the Division of Student Administration:

- a. within one year after they are sent the notification that they have been granted approved withdrawal; although
- b. the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration has discretion to accept a later application where the student provides satisfactory evidence that they were prevented from applying sooner by circumstances outside their control.

### **Special consideration for exemption from attending residential schools**

(36) A student may apply for special consideration to be exempted from attending a compulsory residential school.

(37) They must apply:

- a. before the residential school begins (unless their circumstances prevent them from submitting the application sooner);
- b. using the online special consideration request form; and
- c. attach documents from a third party confirming the date of the circumstances and/or the date(s) of their impact.

(38) Where the residential school is part of the requirements for a subject, the head of the teaching school will decide the application on the recommendation of the Subject Coordinator.

(39) Where the residential school is part of the requirements for a course, and is not linked to a taught subject, the Course Director will decide the application.

(40) The Division of Student Administration will inform the student of the outcome.

(41) Such applications will normally be approved only where the student:

- a. is prevented from attending the residential school by circumstances outside their control;
- b. is recognised by the University as an elite athlete or as performer, and their sporting or performance commitments clash with the residential school;
- c. has previously undertaken the subject and completed the residential school requirements satisfactorily; or
- d. has already completed the learning to be delivered at the residential school.

### **Review of special consideration decisions**

(42) Where a student is declined special consideration, or is dissatisfied with the special consideration they have been granted, their only avenue for review is the review of grade process: see the [Assessment - Grades and Review of Grades Procedure](#).

### **Assessment flexibility for elite athletes and performers**

(43) Schools are expected to provide reasonable assessment flexibility to students who are on the University's register of elite athletes and performers.

(44) Such students must apply to the Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) to be included on this register, by email to eliteathlete@csu.edu.au. They must include supporting documents from the relevant sporting or performance body or association and/or evidence of their participation in elite sporting events or performances.

(45) The Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) will decide whether these applications are sufficient to record the student on the register. For applications to be registered as an elite athlete, they will make this decision in consultation with the Personal Excellence section of the Australian Institute for Sport.

(46) They will distribute to each school, at the beginning of each session, a list of registered elite athletes and performers enrolled in subjects managed by the school. They will notify schools if one of their students is added to the register or removed from it.

(47) Faculties may, however, identify courses where professional accreditation or professional registration requirements limit their ability to provide assessment and/or attendance flexibility to such students.

(48) Such students are expected to work with the Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) to inform school staff of the student's needs. Alternatively the student may email the Course Director to explain their situation and request assessment flexibility.

(49) Such students may also apply for special consideration to request assessment flexibility.

(50) Students are expected to plan study around their sporting or performance commitments as far as possible, and where they will need assessment flexibility to request this as far in advance as possible.

(51) Schools and the Examinations Office will endeavour to provide flexibility where the student gives sufficient notice to arrange this.

(52) The Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) can advise school staff on students' eligibility for assessment flexibility and on consistent practice in providing it.

(53) Where a Subject Coordinator is unsure about whether a student's request for flexibility is reasonable, or it is outside normal practice in providing flexibility to such students, they will refer the request to the Course Director for decision.

(54) Elite athletes and performers may be considered for alternative exam arrangements.

(55) The Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) will:

- a. maintain a web page of information about assessment flexibility each course can provide to elite athletes and performers; and
- b. contact Course Directors annually to review this information for their course.

### **Assessment flexibility for Defence Force reservists**

(56) Schools are expected to provide reasonable assessment flexibility to students who are Defence Force reservists, to enable them to meet Defence Force service commitments.

- a. A student who is a Defence Force reservist can apply for an extension to an assessment deadline or special consideration where they need this to meet a Defence Force service commitment while maintaining their academic progress.
- b. The document they will need to provide for such a request to be considered is the Defence Force instruction to report for the service.

### **Deferred examinations**

(57) Where a deferred exam is granted in accordance with the [Assessment Policy](#) section on special consideration, it will typically be held in the exams period at the end of the following session.

(58) Where a student needs a pass in the subject to progress in their studies, however, the faculty or Division of Student Administration may administer a deferred exam sooner than the next session's final exams period.

(59) The Examinations Office (or, for faculty-run deferred exams, the faculty) will notify the student of the deferred exam arrangement.

- a. The notification must take place at least 10 business days before the date of the deferred exam sitting.
- b. The student may, however, choose to waive this period of notice if there is an opportunity to sit a deferred exam sooner, and they want to sit it sooner.

(60) A deferred exam will have the same weight as the original exam in deciding the final grade in the subject, and will assess the same learning outcomes, with the same level of challenge.

(61) The original exam paper cannot be used as the deferred exam paper, unless the original exam paper was provided to all students in the subject well in advance of the original exam.

(62) Deferred exam answers will be marked by the same process and in the same time-frame as answers from other exams in the same exam period.

## **Alternative examination arrangements**

### **Alternative examination arrangements for breastfeeding mothers**

(63) The [Assessment Policy](#) provides for a student who cannot make alternative arrangements to feed their child during an exam, to request an arrangement to breastfeed during the exam.

(64) The student should submit such a request in writing to the Disability Services no later than six weeks before the start of the relevant exam period. The Disability Services will inform the Examinations Office. The Disability Services and Examinations Office will make every effort to accommodate later requests.

(65) The student will have the options of:

- a. sitting the exam and taking a break to breastfeed, in which case the Examinations Office will do its best to provide suitable arrangements; or
- b. accepting a deferred exam, to be held in a subsequent exam period when the child may be old enough to go without feeding for the period of the exam.

(66) Depending on the facilities at the exam venue, breastfeeding arrangements will include:

- a. a separate room;
- b. extra time, being the time taken to feed the child; and
- c. supervision while feeding the child.

### **Alternative examination arrangements for students with a disability**

(67) The [Assessment Policy](#) provides for alternative arrangements in final exams and in-session assessment tasks for students living with a disability or a long-term physical or mental health condition.

(68) Typical arrangements are described in the guidelines section below.

(69) Where a student needs alternative arrangements to undertake assessments without disadvantage, they must apply:



- a. as early as possible, but at latest:
  - i. for arrangements for in-session tests, by the end of the second teaching week of the session; or
  - ii. for arrangements for final exams, by at least six weeks before the start of the relevant exam period;
- b. in writing to the Disability Services; and
- c. if the student is not already registered with the Disability Services for the condition for which they are requesting alternative arrangements, attaching supporting documents that confirm their disability or health condition, namely:
  - i. a medical certificate in the form prescribed by the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration; and
  - ii. a report from a registered health practitioner as specified by the Disability Services.

(70) Once a student is registered with the Disability Services, they must contact the Subject Coordinators of their subjects, providing their study access plan, to arrange flexibility for in-session assessment tasks as needed.

(71) If a student develops a disability or health condition after the normal deadline for applications to special exam conditions, they should apply as above.

(72) The Disability Services and Examinations Office will do their best to arrange alternative arrangements for late applications, in consultation with staff of the teaching school as relevant.

(73) The student, head of the teaching school or the Executive Director, Division of Student Administration may request a review of a decision on a student's request for alternative arrangements for an exam of in-session test.

(74) Review requests must be submitted in writing to the Director, Student Safety and Wellbeing. The Disability Services will advise the requester of the outcome.

(75) The [Assessment Policy](#) states the decision-makers on these requests.

(76) Exam supervisors will provide students who have been granted alternative exam arrangements with the opportunity to choose to sit the exam under normal conditions, or under the alternative arrangement they have been granted.

## Section 5 - Guidelines

### Minor alternative exam arrangements

(77) Typical minor adjustments to exam arrangements that can be approved by a Disability Liaison Officer are:

- a. exam paper, equipment and furniture adjustments:
  - i. another format such as Braille, enlarged, electronic or coloured exam paper;
  - ii. use of a word processor;
  - iii. use of adaptive software or equipment such as Dragon, Jaws, Zoomtext;
  - iv. provision of the exam questions in electronic format for use with adaptive software;
  - v. special furniture such as an ergonomic chair, extra chairs, desk lectern; and
  - vi. special lighting such as extra lighting, or natural light;
- b. physical exam conditions adjustments:
  - i. rest pauses or breaks during the exam; extra time to move around the exam venue; extra time (up to 15 minutes) per hour of exam;
  - ii. permission to eat or drink in the exam; and

- iii. permission to have medical testing or treatment in the exam: e.g. use of a glucometer or hot packs, injections taking medication;
- c. support people such as a personal carer, reader and/or scribe;
- d. location adjustments:
  - i. a separate individual or group exam room, climate-controlled room, a ground floor and/or wheelchair accessible room;
  - ii. close proximity to a toilet; or
  - iii. a home or hospital exam with a supervisor selected by the Examinations Office.

(78) Typical major adjustments to exam arrangements that can be approved by the head of the teaching school are:

- a. changes to exam format:
  - i. split exam;
  - ii. an oral instead of written exam;
  - iii. restructuring the exam questions: e.g. short answer format to multiple choice format; and
- b. replacement of the exam with an assignment; and
- c. adjustments to timing of the exam within the same day (e.g. an early morning start).

## Status and Details

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