

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.

Section 2 - Policy

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

Section 3 - Procedure

Reasonable adjustments to accommodate disability

- (7) The University will provide reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks for students who:
- are living with a disability or a health condition, or
 - have ongoing carer responsibility for an immediate family member who is living with a disability or a long-term physical or mental health condition.
- (8) Students who require reasonable adjustments are expected to:
- register with the Accessibility and Inclusion Support, and
 - 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 Accessibility and Inclusion Support can develop a study access plan for the student and the student can

provide this to their Subject Coordinators.

(9) Students must register with the Accessibility and Inclusion Support 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.

(10) Reasonable adjustments may be required for all or any assessment tasks in a subject, including in-session tests and final exams. To request reasonable adjustment for an assessment task, students should:

- a. for exams run by the Examinations Office, follow the process set out under the 'Alternative exam arrangements' heading in this procedure, or
- b. for other assessment items, including in-session tests or exams administered by the School, contact their Subject Coordinator. The Subject Coordinator is responsible for providing reasonable adjustments, in consultation with the Head of School as needed.

(11) See the Guidelines section of this procedure for examples of reasonable adjustments.

Extensions of deadlines for submitting assessment work

(12) 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.

(13) 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.

(14) 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.

(15) 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

(16) 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.

(17) 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.

(18) 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. unexpected and 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.

(19) 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

(20) 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).

(21) 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.

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

Applications for special consideration to be granted a deferred exam

(23) 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.

(24) 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.

Special consideration for exemption from attending intensive schools

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

(26) They must apply:

- a. before the intensive 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.

(27) Where the intensive 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.

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

(29) Student Administration will inform the student of the outcome.

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

- a. is prevented from attending the intensive 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 intensive school
- c. has previously undertaken the subject and completed the intensive school requirements satisfactorily, or
- d. has already completed the learning to be delivered at the intensive school.

Supporting documents

(31) 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 disability or condition, or exacerbation of an existing ongoing disability or 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: 1. 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. 2. 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.
Exacerbation of an existing, ongoing disability or condition for which a student has a study access plan in place.	The current, valid study access plan (SAP). Note that: 1. the special consideration request must be related to the condition(s) covered by the SAP, 2. the SAP may only be accepted as evidence where the special consideration request is for an extension.
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: 1. the date the circumstances began or changed, and 2. how the circumstances affected the student's ability to undertake assessment tasks.
Unexpected, unavoidable employment commitments	A statement on letterhead, from the student's employer, including: 1. the date the student's employment commitments or employment status changed, and 2. the nature of the changes.
Sporting, cultural, military or legal commitments	A statement on letterhead from the relevant body, including: 1. details of the event, and 2. the period of interruption of the student's study.
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

(32) 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.

(33) 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).

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

(35) 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

(36) 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

(37) 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.

(38) 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](#).

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

- a. within one year after they are sent the notification that they have been granted approved withdrawal, although
- b. the Executive Director, Students 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.

Review of special consideration decisions

(40) 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

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

(42) 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.

(43) 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.

(44) 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.

(45) 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.

(46) 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.

(47) Such students may also apply for special consideration to request assessment flexibility and/or alternative exam arrangements.

(48) 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.

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

(50) 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.

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

- a. advise school staff on students' eligibility for assessment flexibility and on consistent practice in providing it
- b. maintain a web page of information about assessment flexibility each course can provide to elite athletes and performers, and
- c. contact Course Directors annually to review this information for their course.

Assessment flexibility for Defence Force reservists

(52) 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

(53) Where a deferred exam is granted in accordance with the [Assessment Policy](#) section on special consideration, it will typically be held prior to the census date of the following session.

(54) The Examinations Office (or, for school-run deferred exams, the school or 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.

(55) 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.

(56) 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.

(57) 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.

(58) Where a student is prevented from sitting a deferred exam by circumstances outside their control or is impaired in their performance in the exam by circumstances outside their control, they must contact their subject coordinator, who will refer the matter to the Head of School. The [Assessment Policy](#) states the decisions that are available to the Head of School.

Alternative examination arrangements

Alternative examination arrangements for breastfeeding mothers

(59) 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.

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

(61) 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.

(62) 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

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

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

(65) Where a student needs alternative arrangements to undertake assessments without disadvantage, they must apply through Accessibility and Inclusion Support:

- a. Students must be registered with Accessibility and Inclusion Support (as set out on the [Accessibility and Inclusion website](#)) and obtain a study access plan that will detail alternative exam arrangements as required.
- b. Applications must be submitted in writing and as early as possible, but at latest:
 - i. for arrangements for in-session tests, at least two weeks before the in-session test, or
 - ii. for arrangements for final exams, by at least three weeks before the start of the relevant exam period.

(66) Accessibility and Inclusion Support will make recommendations on the alternative exam arrangements required, to be approved as set out in the [Assessment Policy](#) and the table at clause 69.

- a. For exams run by the Examinations Office, details about alternative exam arrangements will be published on the exam timetable.
- b. For in-session tests or exams administered by the School, the student must contact their Subject Coordinator and provide their study access plan. The Subject Coordinator will organise the alternative exam arrangements.

(67) Students who require alternative exam arrangements after the deadline for applications should apply for a deferred exam through the special consideration process above.

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

Section 4 - Guidelines

Guidelines for alternative exam arrangements

(69) Typical alternative exam arrangements are set out in the following table:

Minor alternative exam arrangements (approved by Accessibility and Inclusion Adviser)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exam paper, equipment and furniture adjustments:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. another format such as Braille, enlarged electronic or coloured exam paper2. use of a word processor3. use of adaptive software or equipment such as Drgon, Jaws, Zoomtext4. provision of the exam questions in electronic format for use with adaptive software5. special furniture such as an ergonomic chair, extra chairs, desk lectern6. special lighting such as extra lighting, or natural light.2. Physical exam conditions adjustments:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. rest pauses or breaks during the exam, extra time to move around the exam venue, extra time (up to 20 minutes per hour of exam)2. permission to eat or drink in the exam3. permission to have medical testing or treatment in the exam, e.g. use of a glucometer or hot packs, injections, taking medication.3. Support people such as a personal carer, reader and/or scribe.4. Location adjustments:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. an individual or a small group exam room, climate-controlled room, a ground floor and/or wheelchair accessible room2. close proximity to a toilet.
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Major alternative exam arrangements (approved by Head of School)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes to exam format: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. split exam 2. an oral instead of written exam 3. restructuring the exam questions, e.g. short answer format to multiple choice format. 2. Replacement of the exam with an assignment. 3. Adjustments to timing of the exam within the same day, e.g. an early morning start. 4. Extra time in the exam in excess of 20 minutes per hour. 5. Use of spell check.
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Guidelines for reasonable adjustments

(70) Examples of reasonable adjustments that can be recommended or facilitated by an Accessibility and Inclusion Adviser that do not relate to exams are set out in the following table. The list is not exhaustive but provides a guide to some types of reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable adjustment that can be recommended or facilitated by an Accessibility and Inclusion Adviser	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring teaching spaces and facilities and accommodation, e.g. request to have lectures and tutorials on the ground floor. 2. Short breaks to be taken within classes. 3. Provision of study materials in an alternate format. 4. Provision of software to assist in accessing learning materials. 5. Provision of equipment. 6. Use of a Participation Assistant during workplace learning. 7. Approved exemption of an assistance dog to be allowed on campus. 8. Notetaking support, e.g. equipment, software. 9. Workplace learning supports. 10. Intensive school supports.
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Section 5 - Glossary

(71) This procedure uses terms defined in the [Assessment Policy](#), as well as the following:

- a. Reasonable adjustment - refers to the administrative, environmental or procedural alterations that are required to remove unnecessary barriers to people with disability working or studying effectively and on the same basis as others. Universities have a statutory responsibility to make such adjustments in work and study contexts wherever it is necessary, possible and reasonable to do so. An adjustment is considered reasonable if it takes into account the requirements of the person with a disability and balances the interests of all parties affected. An organisation may refuse to introduce an adjustment if it can demonstrate that to do so would cause it unjustifiable hardship (as described in the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)).

Status and Details

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