Assessment Flexibility Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This procedure supports the Assessment Policy by stating detailed assessment flexibility arrangements for reasonable adjustments, extensions of due dates, special consideration requests, 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.

Scope

(3) This procedure applies to assessment in coursework subjects and research component subjects for coursework courses. Within that scope, it applies to the same range of staff and students as the Assessment Policy.

(4) This procedure does not apply to:

a. research component subjects in higher degree by research courses (see the Higher Degree by Research Policy)
b. further assessment for students who have 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 (see the Assessment - Conduct of Coursework Assessment and Examinations Procedure).

Section 2 - Policy

(5) This procedure supports the Assessment Policy.

Section 3 - Procedure

Reasonable adjustments to accommodate disability or health conditions

(6) The University will provide reasonable adjustments to assessment tasks for students who:

a. are living with a disability or a health condition, or
b. provide ongoing, unpaid support to people who need help because of disability, mental illness, chronic or terminal illness, dementia or frail age.

(7) Students who require reasonable adjustments must:

a. register with Accessibility and Inclusion Support, and
b. provide documentation from a registered health professional describing their disability or health condition and its effects on their study and assessment work.

This allows Accessibility and Inclusion Support to develop a study access plan for the student to provide to their Subject Coordinators.

(8) Students must register with 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. Reasonable adjustments can be applied to subjects in advance of assessments; they cannot be retrospectively applied to previous assessment tasks or attendance requirements.

(9) 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 administered centrally by the Examinations and Results, apply to Accessibility and Inclusion Support as 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.

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

Extensions of deadlines for submitting assessment work

(11) The Assessment Policy states that a student may request an extension to the due date for in-session assessment tasks (without requiring special consideration) subject to the requirements below.

(12) Such requests must be submitted:

a. in writing or as otherwise advised in the subject outline
b. before the due date in the subject outline.

(13) Subject to clause 14, students will be allowed one automatic, seven-day extension per subject.

(14) Requests for extensions may be refused or referred to a special consideration application where:

a. the extension is for more than seven calendar days
b. the request is received on or after the due date
c. the student has already received an automatically approved extension
d. the extension would delay the student's final grade (these requests should be escalated to the Head of School through special consideration)
e. the assessment task is an exam, further or additional assessment, laboratory/field/clinical work or a time-dependent task that is not practicable to reschedule unless there are reasons for special consideration.

Special consideration

Eligibility for special consideration

(15) Special consideration is available to support students who have:

a. short-term illness or injury
b. unexpected carer responsibilities
c. unexpected employment commitments
d. unexpected exacerbation of a chronic and ongoing health issue
e. other unexpected unavoidable commitments or adverse circumstances outside their control
f. state, national or international sporting or performing commitments or Defence Force commitments.

(16) Examples of 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 work-integrated learning placement commitments
c. death of a family member
d. severe weather and natural disasters
e. 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
f. being called for jury duty or subpoenaed to attend a court or tribunal
g. the student being selected to participate in a state, national or international sporting, artistic, cultural, academic, religious or civil event
h. being required to participate in Defence Reserve activities.

(17) 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. difficulties with English language for assessment tasks
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 due date
g. holidays
h. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity other than selection for state, national or international events.

(18) The Student Misconduct Rule states that a penalty that reduces a student's mark (for an assessment) or grade (for a subject) prevents the student from making any other application in relation to that mark or grade, including a special consideration decision.

Outcomes of special consideration applications

(19) The possible outcomes of a special consideration application are:

a. an extension of time and/or a grade pending grade (GP)
b. a deferred exam
c. an alternative assessment task
d. exemption or alternative arrangements for attending a compulsory intensive school in a subject or course delivered online
e. exemption or alternative arrangements for attending a compulsory practical session in a subject delivered on campus
f. rescheduling or an alternative arrangement for a work-integrated learning placement
g. approved withdrawal from the subject without failure (AW – approved withdrawal grade)
h. late withdrawal from the subject without failure (LW – late withdrawal grade)
i. the special consideration application is declined.

Applications for special consideration

(20) An application for special consideration must be made using the online special consideration request form in the

Student Portal.

(21) Students should apply for special consideration as soon as reasonably possible after they become aware of the adverse circumstances or unexpected commitments. The time limits for submitting a special consideration request are stated in this procedure and on the Current Students Special Consideration website.

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

Special consideration for exams

(23) Where students apply for special consideration in relation to an exam, the application will be considered by the Subject Coordinator, who may recommend to the Head of School that:

a. the student be granted a deferred exam
b. the student be withdrawn from the subject without failing it (resulting in an approved withdrawal (AW) grade), or
c. no action be taken and the student's exam result remain as it is.

(24) 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.

(25) The following rules ensure that a deferred exam does not unfairly advantage the student 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
    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
    ii. they will receive the mark for the exam they have sat
    iii. the student can apply for consideration of this through the review of grade process if they believe that their performance in the exam was impaired by their adverse circumstances.
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.
e. Where a student is prevented from sitting a deferred exam by circumstances outside of their control, the Head of School may, on the recommendation of the Subject Coordinator (who may consult the Course Director):
    i. in exceptional circumstances, grant the student a further, alternative assessment opportunity before the end of the following teaching period, or
    ii. award the student an approved withdrawal (AW) grade in the subject.

f. Where the student sits a deferred exam but is impaired in their performance in the exam by circumstances outside their control, the Head of School may:
    i. grant the student an approved withdrawal
    ii. award the student a grade based on their performance in the deferred exam and any other assessment they have completed, or
    iii. in exceptional circumstances permit the student to complete an alternative assessment task.

(26) See also the 'Deferred exams' heading in this procedure for further information about the conduct of deferred exams.

Special consideration for exemption from attending intensive schools

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

(28) They must:

a. apply before the intensive school begins (unless their circumstances prevent them from submitting the application sooner)
b. apply 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.

(29) Where the intensive school is a requirement for a subject, the head of the teaching school will decide the application on the recommendation of the Subject Coordinator.

(30) Where the intensive school is a requirement for a course and is not linked to a taught subject, the Course Director will decide the application.

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

(32) 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 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

(33) The following table sets out the supporting documents required for special consideration requests:

Circumstance	Document
Short-term disability or condition, or exacerbation of an existing ongoing disability or condition	An authorised 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.

Circumstance	Document
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

(34) The Assessment Policy states the authorities for deciding special consideration requests.

(35) Where a special consideration application is in relation to a work-integrated learning placement, the decision-maker will make the decision in consultation with the relevant Sub Dean (Workplace Learning) or equivalent.

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

(37) Where a special consideration request is granted that requires a grade to be recorded and/or allows an extension beyond the end of the teaching period, either:

a. where the outcome is an approved withdrawal, an AW grade will automatically be recorded for the student in the subject
b. where the outcome is a late withdrawal, an LW grade will automatically be recorded for the student in the subject
c. 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 student will be informed (via the online special consideration functionality) that they have been granted a deferred exam, and the Examinations and Results will notify the student of the deferred exam details.

Criteria for deciding special consideration applications

(38) 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 or late withdrawal

(39) Students permitted to withdraw without failure (either approved withdrawal (AW) or late withdrawal (LW)) 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.

(40) 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.

(41) The 'Refunds after census date (due to exceptional circumstances)' heading in the Enrolment and Fees Procedure provides information about how to apply for a refund of fees or recredit of debt.

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) Students must apply to the Student Liasion Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) to be included on this register and include supporting documents and evidence confirming their current level/status. The Student Liasion Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) may consult as required with the Personal Excellence section of the Australian Institute for Sport.

(45) The Student Liaison Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) will distribute to each school a list of registered elite athletes and performers enrolled in subjects managed by the school, and amendments to the list as required.

(46) Such students are expected to:

a. work with the Student Liasion Officer (Elite Athletes and Sport) to inform school staff of their needs, or email the Course Director to explain their situation and request assessment flexibility
b. submit special consideration requests for assessment flexibility and/or alternative exam arrangements where required
c. plan study around their sporting or performance commitments as far as possible, and, where they will need assessment flexibility, request this as far in advance as possible.

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

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

(49) 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.

(50) The Student Liasion 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

(51) 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 exams

(52) Where a deferred exam is granted in accordance with this procedure (see the 'Special consideration' heading), it will typically be held prior to the census date of the following session.

(53) The Examinations and Results (or, for school-run deferred exams, the school or faculty) will notify the student of the deferred exam arrangement.

(54) 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.

(55) An original exam can only be used as the deferred exam where it was provided to all students in the subject well in advance of the original exam taking place.

(56) 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.

(57) 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. Clause 25 states the decisions that are available to the Head of School.

Alternative exam arrangements

Alternative exam arrangements for breastfeeding parents

(58) The Assessment Policy allows a student to request an arrangement to breastfeed during the exam if they cannot make alternative arrangements to feed their child during an exam.

(59) The student should submit such a request in writing to Accessibility and Inclusion Support at least six weeks before the start of the relevant exam period. The Accessibility and Inclusion Support will inform the Examinations and

Results. The Accessibility and Inclusion Support and Examinations and Results will make every effort to accommodate later requests.

(60) The student will have the options of:

a. sitting the exam and taking a break to breastfeed, in which case the Examinations and Results 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.

(61) For in-person exams, 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 exam arrangements for students with disability

(62) The Assessment Policy provides for alternative arrangements in final exams and in-session assessment tasks for students living with disability or health conditions.

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

(64) 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.

(65) 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 68.

a. For exams run by the Examinations and Results, 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.

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

(67) 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

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

> Note, alternative arrangements for an Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) or other practical exams will be considered on a case by case basis to determine what, if any, reasonable adjustments can be applied in line with the course's inherent requirements.

Minor alternative exam arrangements (approved by Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor)	1. Exam paper, equipment and furniture adjustments: 1. another format such as Braille, enlarged electronic or coloured exam paper 2. use of a computer 3. use of adaptive software or equipment such as Drgon, Jaws, Zoomtext 4. provision of the exam questions in electronic format for use with adaptive software 5. special furniture such as an ergonomic chair, extra chairs, desk lectern 6. special lighting such as extra lighting, or natural light. 2. Physical exam conditions adjustments: 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 exam 3. 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: 1. an individual or a small group exam room, climate-controlled room, a ground floor and/or wheelchair accessible room 2. close proximity to a toilet.
Major alternative exam arrangements (approved by Head of School)	1. Changes to exam format: 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.

Guidelines for reasonable adjustments

(69) Examples of reasonable adjustments that can be recommended or facilitated by an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor 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. Other examples may be found at Students With Disability - Reasonable Adjustments: Disability Specific.

(70) Reasonable adjustments will consider the course's inherent requirements.

Reasonable adjustment that can be recommended or facilitated by an Accessibility and Inclusion Advisor	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. Work-integrated learning placement supports. 10. Intensive school supports.

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).
b. Study access plan – a plan that outlines the recommended reasonable adjustments for an individual student in consideration of the student's health condition or disability, as well as the course requirements.

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