

# Higher Education Special Consideration Fact Sheet - Student

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## PURPOSE

This fact sheet outlines the process and requirements for special consideration concerning assessments including assignments, in class tests or quizzes, final examinations and practicums/clinics/simulations.

Special consideration is provided in order to ensure all students have the right to equity and fairness when undertaking assessment components of their studies. This fact sheet aims to support students who, under normal circumstances, reach their usual demonstrated performance level, but are significantly affected by circumstances beyond their control.

This fact sheet does not cover the situations where a student:

- Is seeking an extension to a due date of an assessment or the deferral of an examination;
- Has been unable to attend an examination; or
- Has marginally failed their Unit of Study and may be eligible for a Supplementary Assessment.

Special Consideration is regarded as a significant concession to a student and will only be considered when the applicant makes a properly documented and timely application.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

A student may apply for special consideration for any assessment item if their performance was seriously affected, or they were seriously disadvantaged when the assessment item was attempted, on the grounds of Misadventure or Compassionate and/or Compelling Circumstances that were beyond their control.

*Specifically, circumstances are **beyond the students control** if a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the students action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student is not responsible. This situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.*

Special consideration only applies under exceptional circumstances.

*For example, You sat your exam, however three days prior there was a bereavement of an immediate family member, you therefore seek special consideration.*

Factors constituting extenuating circumstances, misadventures or accident, must directly relate to the timing of assessment requirements. That is, the timing of the circumstance must be relevant: it must coincide with:

- i. a reasonable time period for preparation of an assessment task; or
- ii. the submission date for an assessment task; or
- iii. the date the simulation/demonstration/practicum was to occur;
- iv. a reasonable period of study for an examination or test; or
- v. the sitting date for an examination or test.

*For example: A misadventure that took place in April, would not be grounds for special consideration for an examination in June, unless the student had evidence that the impact of the difficulty extended through to June.*

Special consideration is not intended for the management of long-term illnesses, disabilities, the routine demands of employment or other ongoing circumstances. In most instances, a student should be able to receive support in completing an assessment task through either a:

- assignment extension – long or short extension
- deferred exam
- reasonable adjustment

Whilst it is not possible for special consideration to compensate for every consequence of illness, injury, other serious cause, or extenuating circumstance affecting a student's academic progress, where appropriate, it may help to minimise the impact of such circumstances without compromising the integrity of learning outcomes of the Unit of Study.

To pass a Unit of Study, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes specified in the Unit Study Guide, regardless of whether special consideration has been granted; and appropriate learning and other support should be sought where you are at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic performance.

## PROCESS

1. You must complete and submit a Special Consideration Application within **two (2) working days after** the submission/timetabled date of the relevant piece of assessment.
2. Separate applications and independent supporting documentation must be submitted for each assessment for which the special consideration is requested.
3. Supporting documentary evidence will be submitted electronically and attached to the Special Consideration Application. You may be asked to provide original documents or to authenticate any documentary evidence provided as part of their application. Documentation and certificates signed by family members will not normally be accepted.
4. Supporting documentation must cover the assessment or examination timeframe and be current, legible, and supplied or translated into English. Supporting documentation must also provide sufficient information for TAFE Queensland to make a decision.
5. The application, including the Medical Impact Statement and any associated Medical Certificate can be obtained via the Learning Management System or the relevant Faculty Administration Officer.
6. The Special Consideration Application form and any documentary evidence may be lodged in person to the Higher Education Administration Officer at the TAFE Queensland campus at which the course is delivered or by email to [Highered@tafeqld.edu.au](mailto:Highered@tafeqld.edu.au)

## QUESTIONS?

Please contact the regional faculty administration officer: [Highered@tafeqld.edu.au](mailto:Highered@tafeqld.edu.au)

## COMMUNICATION OF DECISION

The relevant faculty Administrative Officer will notify the student in writing, of the outcome of the special consideration application(s).

## DECISION REVIEW

- There is no provision for appeal against the outcome awarded for Special Consideration and the decision is final.
- However, a student who is aggrieved may take action under TAFE [Queensland's Student Complaints Management Procedure](#).

## EXAMPLES OF GROUNDS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

Examples of circumstances which may be grounds for Special Consideration:

- Immediate and short-term medical conditions or events.
  - Serious illness or injury or temporary disability (e.g. surgery, conditions requiring hospital treatment, severe asthma, broken limb impacting on ability to undertake assessment task, debilitating psychological conditions such as severe anxiety or depression, pregnancy complications)
- Psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event, for example:
  - death of a close family member, such as a parent, grandparent or sibling, or of a close friend
  - family or relationship breakdown
  - abuse (e.g. incident of domestic violence, flight from an abusive situation)
  - sexual harm
- Financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the students' control. For example: sudden loss of income or employment (e.g. retrenchment, collapse of a family business)
- Emergency travel (e.g. because of major political upheaval in the student's home country).
- Personal or family hardship because of natural disaster, such as bushfires or flooding.
- Transport breakdown causing the student to miss or to be significantly late for an examination or other assessment task (acceptable proof of the breakdown must be provided).
- Substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control.
- Sporting or cultural commitments only where a student has been selected, through a formal documented process, to represent or participate in a state, national or international event.
- Military commitments where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise.
- Military reserve commitments where a student is required to attend a compulsory exercise.
- Emergency service commitments only where a student is required to attend an emergency and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation.
- Legal commitments, where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend court, tribunal or hearing, and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation.
- Traumatic experience (e.g. witnessing or being involved in a serious accident, witnessing or being a victim of a serious crime).
- Compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature where the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation from a relevant official or leader of the event/activity.

## FACTORS NOT NORMALLY CONSIDERED AS GROUNDS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

The following circumstances would **not normally** be regarded as grounds for Special Consideration:

- Misreading the timetable
- Timetable clashes
- Routine demands of employment and employment related travel
- Day-to-day issues or minor illnesses that can be treated with over-the-counter medications (e.g. colds, headaches, gastric upsets, period pain, hay fever)
- Difficulties adjusting to tertiary studies, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively and to the demands of academic work
- Routine financial support needs
- Long-term illness, or disabilities - refer to Student Support Services
- Lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work
- Difficulties with English language
- Difficulties with visa arrangements that could have been reasonably anticipated
- Scheduled anticipated changes of address, moving home, house moves etc.
- Demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity (other than to represent or participate in state, national or international sporting or cultural events)
- Recreational travel (domestic or international)
- Planned events, other than those listed above, for example, weddings.
- Claimed disadvantages that are not substantiated.
- Discretionary activities such as vacation plans, parties, visits with friends or relatives

## EXAMPLES OF APPROPRIATE EVIDENCE

Reason for the circumstance	Examples of relevant supporting documentation
Short term illness	Doctor's certificate/mental health practitioner certificate and the TAFE Queensland Medical Impact Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hardship or Trauma</li> <li>• Bereavement</li> <li>• Hardship</li> <li>• Trauma</li> <li>• Family breakdown</li> <li>• Sudden loss of income,</li> <li>• Victim of crime</li> <li>• Sexual harm</li> <li>• Unexpected Carer responsibilities</li> <li>• Unexpected events or accidents</li> </ul>	<p>Police report, bereavement notice, official letter from relevant source/authority, correspondence from a TAFE Queensland Officer or a statutory declaration setting out the circumstances that are the basis of the application.</p> <p>Correspondance from a TAFE Queensland Counsellor.</p>
Unscheduled or unexpected Defence Force and National Service commitments	A statement signed by an authorised officer of the Australian Defence Force detailing the dates and times when attendance at an Australian Defence Force commitment is to take place; or detailing full-time service (e.g. as part of a peacekeeping or humanitarian aid operation); or a National Service enlistment notice.
Unscheduled or unexpected elite athlete obligations	A statement signed by an authorised officer of the relevant sporting organisation detailing training schedules and sporting commitment.
Emergency services situations, such as unscheduled or unexpected SES call-outs	Statutory declaration setting out the circumstances that are the basis of the application,
Unscheduled or unexpected religious observance and special cultural and religious considerations	Statutory declaration setting out the circumstances that are the basis of the application. Letter from religious leader/Elder.
Unscheduled or unexpected jury service, certain court appearances	Court summons