

# Special Consideration.

---

## **An Essential Guide for Students When Applying for Special Consideration Due to Compassionate & Compelling Circumstances.**

---

### **Contents**

1. The “Fit to Sit” Rule
2. What is Special Consideration
3. Time Frames for Applying for Special Consideration
4. Maximum Number Allowed Per Student, Per Assessment
5. Supporting Evidence
6. Accepted Supporting Evidence
7. Not Accepted Supporting Evidence
8. Medical Certification and Registered Health Professionals
9. Online Medical Certificates
10. Backdated Certificates
11. Medical Certificates where symptoms are self-reported
12. Re-assessment of your Special Consideration request
13. Appeals
14. Wellbeing and Support Services
15. Equitable Learning Services
16. Relevant Policies for Further Information

## 1. “Fit to Sit” Rule Applies to Exams and Timed Assessments

Students are responsible for deciding before an assessment start time whether they are unwell or facing significant circumstances which will impact their performance in that assessment or exam.

- By sitting the exam or accessing a timed assessment (eg final exam/quiz) on the scheduled assessment date, you are declaring that you are fit to do so and therefore cannot later apply for Special Consideration.
- Sitting or accessing an assessment task on the scheduled assessment date, after applying for special consideration, renders the special consideration application void.
- A student who becomes unwell during an examination can request Special Consideration if they stop working on the examination, notify the Examination Supervisor immediately and provide a local medical certificate dated within 24 hours of the examination.
- Exceptions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis where it is clear that a student was unfit to make reasonable judgement on their fitness to undertake the assessment, due to mental illness or other extenuating circumstances.

## 2. Special Consideration

When illness strikes unexpectedly, or you experience circumstances that are beyond your control – meaning you could not have anticipated or avoided those circumstances, or perhaps there is a major life event that happen. If any of these scenarios negatively impact your ability to study before an assessment or an exam, or impact your ability to actually attend an assessment or exam, then you may be eligible for Special Consideration. Special Consideration is something that students themselves have to apply for with a [formal application](#). Special Consideration is not automatically granted.

Compassionate or Compelling circumstances are those that you could not have reasonably anticipated or avoided. These include, but are not limited to, the following life events:

- Illness, injury, medical emergency, hospitalisation
- Birth of your child or a sibling
- Death of a family member, close friend or pet
- Court appearance or jury duty
- Moving house due to eviction

Life events may be considered for assessments that are *held in person on the same day* but will not be considered for assessments where students can plan for this event in advance and therefore arrange study time and workload accordingly

Where there has been a death of a family member, friend or pet, we understand this may impact you for longer than your documentation may outline. These situations are assessed on a case-by-case basis and factor in other criteria such as recency of the event and impact on ability to complete assessments.

We understand there is no defined time limit for grief, therefore, in circumstances where the death occurred significantly before an assessment, we may require more up-to-date documentation, such as a medical completed by an AHPRA approved medical practitioner and should outline how your circumstances are having a continued impact on your wellbeing and/or ability to complete your assessments.

### **3. Time Frames for Applying for Special Consideration**

Applications for Special Consideration must be submitted ***within 3 working days*** of the assessment or exam due date (refer to dates in Moodle or the course outline). If you are unable to submit on-time, late applications may be considered in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

### **4. Maximum Number of Applications Per Assessment / Exam.**

The College will accept a maximum of 2 Special Consideration requests per assessment task or exam. For example, if you miss an exam due to illness and are granted the opportunity to sit a later scheduled supplementary exam, and then miss it due to further illness, the College will allow you to submit a second Special Consideration request.

**Note.** Where a student has applied for multiple special considerations in one (1) course or across different courses due to an ongoing medical issue, an equitable learning plan (ELP) should be implemented. Student should contact [els@unswcollege.edu.au](mailto:els@unswcollege.edu.au) to request information about Equitable Learning Plans.

### **5. Supporting Evidence is always required with your Special Consideration Request**

Any application for Special Consideration must be supported by documentation that indicates clearly that the student was unable to comply. Applications without supporting evidence will not be considered. Supporting evidence must identify the circumstances and include:

- The time period required for special consideration
- The date when the student was seen by the professional providing the evidence
- The impact of the circumstances

#### **6. Supporting Evidence that is accepted:**

- Local Medical Certificate provided by an [AHPRA health practitioner](#) -
- Online Medical Certificate provided with a Telehealth service from an [AHPRA health practitioner](#)
- Hospital Admission / Hospital Discharge document
- Police report or statement where there has been an accident or a crime
- Official letter from relevant source/authority
- Death notice
- [Statutory Declarations](#) for hardship or trauma including sudden changes in domestic arrangements: e.g. eviction, homelessness, unexpected serious financial difficulties,
- Official letter from court for court appearance or jury duty
- Letter from Employer
- Letter from religious leader/Elder confirming the date(s) of the religious commitment and requirement to observe
- Unexpected carers requirements
- Official letter from sports organisation, club or manager for elite athletes, performers.
- For online assessments, screenshots demonstrating technical issues should be submitted immediately:
  - error messages
  - screen not loading
  - timestamped speed tests
  - power outage map
  - messages or information from your internet provider regarding the issues experienced
  - Evidence that the exam invigilator acknowledged your technical issue

#### **7. Supporting Evidence that is not acceptable:**

Your application for Special Consideration will be denied if:

- Student submits incomplete or inadequate supporting documentation.
- Student makes no attempt to describe or explain reasons why they were unable to attend an assessment.
- Late enrolment in a course and/or late onshore arrival, excluding matters related to legislation, compliance and policy.
- After 3 working days of the assessment due date.
- Student did not plan accordingly – ie. woke up late, missed your bus etc.
- Student failed to note the correct assessment date and time, or misread the exam timetable; student claims that the date and time of the assessment was not clearly communicated.
- Student submitted the incorrect assessment and/or exam file.
- Student forgot laptop charger and laptop battery died during the exam.
- Where a student does not have the required equipment, including the required hardware/software installed on devices as per pre-arrival device guidelines and exam instructions. This might include, for example, a working camera for online exams.
- Personal travel & holidays
- Booked your flight ticket too early, prior to knowing the supplementary exam dates
- Where a student decides to attend an event (e.g. conferences) during a study period. For major events (e.g. weddings, funerals), students must inform the UNSW College Assessment Team of their need for a special consideration within the first two (2) weeks of the relevant Term.
- Public transport or traffic delays (excluding industrial strike actions).
- Student is experiencing heavy academic workload, balancing study load across courses or overloading with additional courses in the given term
- Two or more assessments due on the same date
- Where a quiz or exam is open for an extended timeframe. For example, a quiz that is open for an extended timeframe (> 3 days).
- Work commitments unless unexpected and unavoidable.
- Volunteering or club/society events and commitments.
- Professional experience organised independently by student.
- Late enrolment in the course.
- Technology problems that could have been prevented, avoided, or minimised by good time management practices.
  - Uploading assessments in the final minutes of an upload period
  - Loss of work because draft copies of the assessment were not saved in multiple locations. Students have responsibility to back up their work.
  - Computer updates during an online assessment - students must ensure that auto-updates are disabled on their computer prior to the online assessment.

- Where sufficient time is granted to complete the assessment before the assessment submission date (i.e., > 24 hours), individual assessment tasks that are weighted less than five (5) percent of a student's total mark for a course will not be considered for special consideration.
- Where the timing or organisation of an assessment prohibits a request for special consideration. For instance:
  - Where the timing of a supplementary assessment would delay a student's academic progression.
  - Circumstances which make it impractical to provide an alternative assessment e.g., a make-up biology lab which requires the use of UNSW facilities.
  - Note: In cases where a request for special consideration is deemed valid, the student will receive an average of their marks for the assessment.

## 8. Medical Certification and Registered Health Professionals

All submitted medical certificates must be local and will be checked. Any student presenting a fraudulent document will be subject to Non Academic Misconduct as per the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and penalties will apply.

**Registered health professionals** are those accredited by [AHPRA, the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#). Students are responsible for consulting and providing resulting evidence from health professionals who are registered with AHPRA, and may include medical practitioners from:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice
- Chinese Medicine
- Chiropractic
- Dental
- Medical
- Medical Radiation Practice
- Nursing and Midwifery
- Occupational Therapy
- Optometry
- Osteopathy
- Pharmacy
- Physiotherapy
- Podiatry
- Psychology

## **9. Online Medical Certificates**

UNSW College will accept online medical certificates if provided in consultation with an AHPRA registered provider. This should be via a telephone consult with a doctor. Online medical certificates submitted without consulting with a doctor (either over the phone or online) will not be accepted. Online certificates are an appropriate alternative when they are used:

- as an adjunct to normal medical practice
- for regular patients of the practice
- for patients who have been referred by another medical practitioner; and
- when it is clinically appropriate not to physically attend a doctor's office due to patient's symptoms

All online medical certificates submitted as part of an application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to confirm their appropriateness and authenticity.

Please note if your Medical Certificate appears to be non-genuine and the College is required to follow up with the medical provider to verify its authenticity, it will be the student's responsibility to help follow up with the medical centre to respond to any verification request.

## **10. Backdated medical documentation**

Documentation that is dated after the period of impact will be accepted if the student submits within the 3 business days after the exam. All applications will be assessed on the period of impact specified in the medical certificate and not when the student consulted their medical practitioner.

## **11. Medical Certificates where symptoms are self-reported**

All applications will be assessed on the period of impact specified in the medical certificate, even when the medical practitioner writes that the symptoms were self-reported by the patient and not observed.

The only exception is where the medical certificate provided does not align with the student's circumstances as stated in their original application. Applications of this nature will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## **12. Re-assessment**

If a Special Consideration application is denied, students can only request a re-assessment of this if:

- (i) they have additional or updated supporting documents to further support their application.
- (ii) Do so within 3 working days of the outcome being delivered

### **13. Appeals**

If a student wishes to appeal their initial or re-assessed Special Consideration outcome, they must reply to their outcome email within 3 working days of receiving their outcome, outlining their reason/s for the appeal. Only one appeal per application will be considered. Students can further appeal their outcome by following UNSW College's Student [Appeals Policy](#).

### **14. Wellbeing and Support Services**

At any time during your studies, students are encouraged to ask for help from the Student Wellbeing team located at the L5 Building, Level 1. [Use this link to book a confidential appointment](#)

### **15. Equitable Learning Services**

The College aims to support all types of learners. If you require additional learning support or educational adjustments, you should consider contacting the Equitable Learning Services team: <https://my.unswcollege.edu.au/student-support/equitable-learning-services/>

### **16. Relevant Policies for Further Information**

More information and related information can be found in the following College policies located on the College website: [Policies & forms documents | UNSW College](#)

1. [Guidelines for Assessing Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances](#)
2. [Assessment Policy](#)
3. [Student Appeal Policy](#)