

Special Consideration.

A guide for students when applying for Special Consideration due to compassionate & compelling circumstances.

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1. What is 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 happens...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
- Weddings
- 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.

2. 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.

3. 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, and if approved you may sit a third and final opportunity. This 2-limit rule applies regardless of evidence provided.

4. "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 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.

5. Supporting Evidence

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

Evidence that is accepted:

- Medical Certificate provided by 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.
- Wedding invitation
- 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

6. Evidence that is not acceptable

Your application for Special Consideration will be denied if you:

- Book your flight ticket too early, prior to knowing the supplementary exam dates
- did not bring a laptop charger to the exam room and your laptop battery died during the exam
- did not plan accordingly – ie. woke up late, missed your bus etc.
- misread the course information
- misread the exam timetable
- attending events such as concerts, talk shows, sporting events, protest
- personal travel & holidays
- professional experience organised independently by student
- heavy academic workload
- overloading with additional courses in the given term
- two or more assessments due on the same date
- work commitments (unless unexpected and unavoidable)
- computer updating during an online assessment
- volunteering commitments
- club/society events and commitments
- late enrolment in the course
- Students must ensure that auto-updates are disabled on their computer prior to the online assessment.
- Special consideration will not be awarded on the grounds that a student's computer updated during an online assessment.

- Students have responsibility to back up their work.

7. Registered Health Professionals

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

8. Online Medical Certificates

All medical certificates in Australia will be verified to minimise the submission of fraudulent documentation.

UNSW will accept online medical certificates if provided in consultation with an AHPRA registered provider. 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

9. Verifying Online Medical Certificates

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 [Appeals Policy](#).

14. Support Services

- At any time during your studies, students are encouraged to ask for help from our Student Support team located at the L5 Building, Level 1. Student Advisers can assist students with Special Consideration application or appeal process.

[Use this link to book a confidential appointment](#)

- Counselling services for all students. Free and confidential.
Book here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/counselling>
- Medical and Health Services.
Book here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/health>
- Equitable Learning Services.
If you anticipate your circumstances may be ongoing, you may wish to consider Educational Adjustments to assist you in managing your circumstances and studies simultaneously. For information visit: <https://my.unswcollege.edu.au/student-support/equitable-learning-services/>