


DOCUMENT TYPE	G	
ACADEMIC	1	
TEACHING AND LEARNING	1	
ASSESSMENT	2	
NUMBER	038	
		Policy Database Document Reference Number 112038G

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION GUIDELINES

<b>Parent Policy Title</b>	Special Consideration Policy														
<b>Associated Documents</b>	Special Consideration Procedures														
<b>Preamble</b>	These guidelines are provided to assist staff who are required to interpret and apply the Special Consideration Policy and Procedures.														
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<b>1. Distinctions between Special Consideration and Alternative Examination/ Assessment Arrangement</b>	<p><b>Special Consideration</b> Students should apply for Special Consideration normally only when the circumstance that has affected, or is expected to affect, their performance in an assessment task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is unforeseen; and</li> <li>• is outside their control; and</li> <li>• is of such severity or significance that a reasonable person would deem the grounds serious rather than frivolous; and</li> <li>• can be categorised as serious illness or injury, emotional disturbance or misadventure.</li> </ul> <p>Note that students who bear a primary carer responsibility toward another person at the time of the assessment may apply for Special Consideration based upon serious illness or injury, emotional disturbance or misadventure on the part of the person for whom they are responsible in the same manner as if the serious illness or injury, emotional disturbance or misadventure was their own.</p> <p><b>Alternative Examination Arrangement – medical reasons</b> Students with a temporary or permanent disability that may impede their performance in a centrally administered examination should contact a <a href="#">Disability Advisor</a> well in advance of the examination to negotiate reasonable adjustments. A student who has received a reasonable adjustment (e.g. an extension of time) on a particular basis cannot also be granted Special Consideration on the same basis.</p>														

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	<p><b>Alternative Examination Arrangement – non-medical reasons</b>  Students should contact the Examinations Office to apply for an Alternative Examination arrangement when, for any of the non-medical reasons listed on the <a href="#">Alternative Examination Arrangements</a> web page:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• they cannot sit a centrally administered examination on the scheduled date or at the scheduled time; but</li> <li>• they can sit the examination on another date or at another time within the same official examination period.</li> </ul> <p>Students with one of the listed non-medical reasons who cannot sit during the official examination period should contact their College to determine whether a special arrangement can be negotiated.</p> <p><i>Note that the accepted non-medical reasons for alternative examination arrangements include religious or cultural obligations.</i></p> <p><b>Alternative Assessment Arrangement</b>  Students who, for any of the reasons listed on the <a href="#">Alternative Examination Arrangements</a> web page, cannot meet the conditions (e.g. due date, sitting time) for a College-administered assessment should contact the relevant Subject Coordinator to see whether an alternative assessment arrangement can be negotiated.</p> <p>Assessment arrangements cannot normally be altered for reasons other than those listed in the Special Consideration Procedures or on the Alternative Examination Arrangements form.</p>
<p><b>2. Examples of allowable grounds for Special Consideration</b></p>	<p>Special Consideration is awarded only where the grounds cited by the student fall under the categories of serious illness, emotional disturbance or misadventure. In some circumstances, the grounds may straddle more than one category.</p> <p>In the interests of equitable treatment of all applications for Special Consideration, the lists below will be updated periodically as new precedents are established.</p> <p><b>Allowable grounds</b>  Applications on any of the grounds in this section must be substantiated through the provision of a medical statement or other appropriate documentary evidence. This evidence normally must be provided by an independent third party (i.e. not by a member of the applicant's family). The timing of the circumstance must be relevant: that is, it must coincide with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a reasonable time period for preparation of an assessment task; or</li> <li>• the submission date for an assessment task; or</li> <li>• a reasonable period of study for an examination or test; or</li> <li>• the sitting date for an examination or test.</li> </ul> <p>A misadventure that took place in March, for example, would not be</p>

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grounds for special consideration for an examination in June, unless the student had evidence that the impact of the difficulty extended through to June.

Examples of allowable grounds include:

- 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)
- death of a close family member, such as a parent, grandparent or sibling, or of a close friend
- family or relationship breakdown
- sudden loss of income or employment (e.g. retrenchment, collapse of a family business)
- abuse (e.g. incident of domestic violence, flight from an abusive situation)
- emergency travel (e.g. as a result of major political upheaval in the student's home country)
- personal or family hardship as a result of natural disaster, such as bushfires or flooding
- traumatic experience (e.g. witnessing or being involved in a serious accident, witnessing or being a victim of a serious crime)
- transport breakdown causing the student to miss or to be significantly late for an examination or other assessment task (as for all other grounds, acceptable proof of the breakdown must be provided).

**Exclusions**

As a general guide, the following would not in themselves be acceptable grounds for special consideration:

- claimed disadvantages that are not substantiated
- 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)
- cultural or religious obligations (these are covered under Alternative Examination Arrangements) unless these occur as the result of serious and unforeseen circumstances
- travel, other than for reasons covered under 'Allowable Grounds'
- work commitments
- difficulties with English
- pregnancy (unless there are complications)
- social events, including weddings
- problems of a student's own making (e.g. avoidable issues relating

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	<p>to visa requirements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discretionary activities such as vacation plans, parties, visits with friends or relatives</li> <li>• assessment difficulties resulting from deliberate choices (e.g. failure to attend classes or to submit assignments, non-completion of prerequisite or co-requisite subjects, subject overload)</li> <li>• misreading the timetable</li> <li>• timetable clashes (covered by Alternative Examination Arrangements)</li> <li>• academic workload and/or professional experience requirements of the course being undertaken</li> <li>• sporting or artistic commitments (note that those at elite level are covered under Alternative Examination arrangements)</li> <li>• early commencement of holiday employment</li> <li>• death of a pet</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Assessing applications for eligibility</b></p>	<p>University officers who assess student applicants' eligibility for Special Consideration will take the following matters into account.</p> <p><b>Is the application timely?</b> Applications should be submitted by the student not later than 3 working days after the date of an examination or other assessment event or after the due date for an assessment task. Late applications may be considered if the applicant provides a satisfactory explanation why he or she could not meet the deadline.</p> <p><b>Is the application complete?</b> Applications must be submitted using the online <a href="#">Special Consideration application form</a> and must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation – including, where relevant, a statement from a professional practitioner on the approved <a href="#">University form</a>. However, the provision of a statement in an alternative form will not automatically invalidate the application. For example, a doctor's own form of medical statement is acceptable as long as it indicates clearly the date of the medical examination, the date or duration of the medical condition and an assessment of the severity of the condition.</p> <p>It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide a complete application, including all necessary supporting documentation. University staff will not contact students whose application for Special Consideration is incomplete. Applications will be assessed as received.</p> <p><b>Are the grounds acceptable?</b> This is covered in section above.</p> <p><b>Is the documentation sufficient?</b> An application which relates to illness must be accompanied by a <a href="#">medical statement</a>. The following principles will apply in the evaluation of</p>

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	<p>applications involving medical statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backdated medical statements will not normally be accepted. They may be accepted where they refer to an existing condition which the medical practitioner has been managing with the patient.</li> <li>• The medical statement must cover the date on which the assessment task was held (examination test, etc.), or during which it should have been completed (essay, take-home examination, etc.).</li> <li>• The medical statement must be from a registered medical practitioner. The best way to ensure that this is the case is to ensure the certificate includes a Medicare Provider No. (This is normally a 5 or 6-digit number followed by 2 letters). Statements that do not include a Provider No. are not likely to be accepted.</li> <li>• The medical statement must indicate that in the medical practitioner's opinion the student was or will be unfit to attend an assessment task or has been or will be adversely affected by illness. Medical statements in which the medical practitioner reports that a student <i>claims</i> to be unwell will not be accepted.</li> </ul> <p>Where a student has left the exam after its commencement but before its completion, this will need to be verified by the exam invigilator's report or confirmed by the subject coordinator.</p> <p>Applications on grounds other than medical grounds should include as much documentary evidence as possible to support the application. This documentation should be objective evidence from an independent source.</p> <p>Documentation may include, for example, a death notice or certificate, police report, current letter from La Trobe Counselling Service or Equality and Diversity Centre.</p> <p>Special Consideration and Compliance staff should exercise discretion in assessing documentation. If, for example, a student would be unduly disadvantaged by having to provide particular documentation, reasonable alternatives should be considered.</p>
<p><b>4. Assessment of impact</b></p>	<p>The Special Consideration Procedures require Special Consideration and Compliance staff to advise the relevant subject coordinator of the estimated impact of the adverse circumstances claimed by the student. Impact may be assessed as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minor; or</li> <li>• moderate; or</li> <li>• severe</li> </ul> <p><b>Minor impact</b></p> <p>The impact of an adverse circumstance is minor when a student is able to participate in an assessment task with minimal impairment (e.g. where a student had a cold or headache, went to the doctor and was given prescription medication).</p>

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	<p><b>Moderate</b> The impact of an adverse circumstance is moderate when a student is able to participate in an assessment task with a moderate degree of impairment.</p> <p><b>Severe</b> The impact of an adverse circumstance is severe where a student is unable to – or, for their own good, should not – participate in an assessment task (e.g. where a student suffers from appendicitis, a minor stroke, a heart attack, a serious injury).</p> <p><u>Note:</u> The impact of many conditions – e.g. headaches, broken bones or depression – may range from minor to severe, depending on the type and impact of the symptoms.</p> <p><b>Medical statements</b></p> <p>The <a href="#">Medical Impact Statement</a> that the University prefers professional practitioners to complete includes a section where the practitioner can make an assessment of the likely impact of the adverse circumstances on the student’s performance. Where available, this assessment will be communicated to the relevant Subject Coordinator(s).</p> <p>It is understood that students making an emergency visit to a professional practitioner will not necessarily take with them the University’s preferred form. Accordingly, Special Consideration and Compliance staff will often be required to assess impact themselves on the basis of the information available to them. The assessment will take into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the specific adverse circumstance for which the student has sought special consideration (e.g. an emergency appendectomy, injuries sustained in a serious motor accident or violent assault, the death of a parent or partner, or serious damage to the student’s writing hand just before a written examination might all be seen as high impact events);</li> <li>• the timing of the impact, with reference to the type of assessment task and the type of adverse circumstance (e.g. an adverse circumstance that occurs on or just before an examination date <i>may</i> have more impact than one that is more remote in time from the assessment event).</li> </ul> <p>Where the information available does not allow a reasonable assessment of the probable impact, the Subject Coordinator(s) will be so advised. In these circumstances, an opportunity to undertake some form of extra assessment may be a more appropriate form of special consideration than a mark adjustment.</p>
<p><b>5. Determination of special consideration outcome</b></p>	<p>The actual outcome of a successful consideration application for any given subject will be determined by the Subject Coordinator, unless otherwise determined by the College Committee of the College that controls the subject. For example, a particular College may decide that special consideration outcomes are to be determined by a College committee. In that case, the decision of the College Board must be properly recorded (e.g. in the form of an approved College Board minute).</p>



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	<p>The outcome awarded should be based on two considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• what is most appropriate for the individual student, given the circumstances that led to the successful request for special consideration and the impact of the circumstances; and</li> <li>• what is possible for the University. For example, set timelines apply to the arrangement of centrally-administered special examinations, which must be conducted within the University-approved special examination period.</li> </ul> <p>Academic staff may wish to consider the following suggestions in determining what outcome to award:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the impact of the adverse circumstance has been assessed as <b>minor</b>, the most appropriate outcomes may be mark adjustment, or review and resubmission.</li> <li>• Where the impact of the adverse circumstance has been assessed as <b>moderate</b>, the academic may select from the full range of possible outcomes.</li> <li>• Where the impact of the adverse circumstance has been assessed as <b>severe</b>, the most appropriate outcomes are likely to be special examinations or other forms of additional assessment.</li> </ul> <p>For more information on the use of mark adjustments, see section 6 below.</p>
<p><b>6. Use of mark adjustments</b></p>	<p>It is expected that a mark adjustment will be awarded primarily for examinations or other assessment tasks that have been <i>attempted</i> and <i>passed</i> by the student applicants. Where a mark adjustment is used, it is suggested that the following table apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor impact – 1 mark</li> <li>• Moderate impact – 3 marks</li> <li>• Severe impact – 5 marks</li> </ul> <p>This table is predicated on the assessment task being worth 100%. Where the assessment is worth less than 100% (e.g. 20%), the mark adjustment must be proportionate. For example, for a piece of assessment worth 20%, minor impact would be recognised with a 0.2 mark adjustment; moderate, 0.6; and severe, 1.0.</p> <p>For information on the assessment of impact, see section 4 above.</p>
<p><b>Status</b></p>	<p>Minor revisions 11 November 2015. New. Special Consideration Policy and Procedure approved by Academic Board 14 March 2012, minute reference 454.3.2.</p>
<p><b>Approval Body</b></p>	<p>Academic Board</p>

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<b>Initiating Body</b>	Student Services and Administration
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b>Alternative Examination Arrangement:</b> an arrangement between a student and the University's Examinations Office to sit a scheduled examination at another time or in another location due to medical reasons, some non- medical reasons set out at <a href="http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/exams/sitting/alternative">http://www.latrobe.edu.au/students/exams/sitting/alternative</a>, or examination clashes.</p> <p><b>Special Consideration:</b> depending on context, (1) a special concession in assessment, sought by a student claiming that his or her performance in an examination or in another Assessment Task was affected adversely by illness or another cause; or (2) the administrative form ('Application for Special Consideration') by which a student may apply for a special concession in assessment; or (3) the outcome of a successful application for Special Consideration (e.g. 'Special Consideration given').</p> <p><b>Subject Coordinator:</b> for purposes of these Guidelines, any other officer or committee appointed by a College Board to carry out the functions attributed to the Subject Coordinator.</p>
<b>Date Effective</b>	28 July 2014
<b>Next Review Date</b>	9 November 2016
<b>Keywords</b>	Special consideration, alternative examination, alternative assessment
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Director, Student Administration
<b>Contact person or area</b>	<a href="mailto:Academic_Policy@latrobe.edu.au">Academic_Policy@latrobe.edu.au</a>