

## **ACADEMIC PATHWAY PROGRAMS SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY**

### **SECTION 1 - PURPOSE AND CONTEXT**

(1) UWSCollege recognises that there will be serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances (including sporting and cultural events) beyond a student's control which are of such severity or gravity that they may impact adversely on academic performance.

(2) To pass units, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the unit learning outcomes; merely applying for Special Consideration on the basis of serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances will not demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved. Granting Special Consideration recognises extenuating circumstances, and provides alternative ways in which a student may be assessed, so they are not disadvantaged. Granting Special Consideration for assessment tasks (including examinations) will generally not take the form of allocating additional marks, or changing grades without undertaking an alternative assessment.

(3) The underlying principle of this policy is that all students have the right to equity and fairness when undertaking the assessment components of their studies. The policy has been instituted to support students who would under normal circumstances reach their usual demonstrated performance level but are significantly affected by serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances beyond their control.

(4) This policy does not cover the situations where a student:

- a. has been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline, or
- b. has been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course except where serious misadventure is the cause.

These situations are covered in guidelines that are part of UWSCollege's Assessment Policy.

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## SECTION 2 - DEFINITIONS

(5) Examinations:

- a. Final Examination — A formal, supervised assessment activity used to assess student learning outcomes which normally takes place at the conclusion of a formal teaching period, during the Formal Examination Period.
- b. Formal Examination Period refers to the end of session UWSCollege examinations. In this Policy, examinations conducted during the teaching session are considered to be an assessment task.
- c. Deferred Examination — An examination granted to a student as a concession for inability to attend the final examination in a unit due to serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances. Deferred examinations are held immediately after the Formal Examination Period.
- d. Supplementary Examination - an examination offered by the College to a student as a possible outcome of a Special Consideration application. The College will administer and invigilate Supplementary Examinations.

(6) Serious Misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances is any unexpected event that is outside a student's capacity to prevent or overcome that demonstrably affects their capacity to complete teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks, or achieve the level of attainment typical of their previous performance in the unit.

- a. Factors contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances, misadventure or accident, must directly relate to the timing of unit teaching/learning and/or assessment requirements. These can include:
  - i. medical conditions or events;
  - ii. psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event;
  - iii. physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident;
  - iv. financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control;
  - v. substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status beyond the student's control.
  - vi. substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control.
- b. The following factors would not normally be considered as contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances:

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- i. routine demands of employment and employment-related travel;
  - ii. difficulties adjusting to university life, to the self discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;
  - iii. stress or anxiety normally associated with examinations, required assessment tasks or any aspect of course work;
  - iv. routine financial support needs;
  - v. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work;
  - vi. difficulties with English language;
  - vii. difficulties with visa arrangements that could have been reasonably anticipated.
  - viii. scheduled anticipated changes of address, moving home, house moves etc.
- c. Circumstances which can be grounds for a Special Consideration application other than serious misadventure or accident may also include:
- i. 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;
  - ii. military commitments where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise;
  - iii. military reserve commitments where a student is required to attend a compulsory exercise;
  - iv. emergency service commitments only where a student is required to attend an emergency situation and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
  - v. legal commitments, where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal or hearing, and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
  - vi. compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature (excluding those specified in Clause 6d) where the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation from a relevant official or leader of the event/activity.
- d. The following circumstances would not normally be regarded as grounds for a Special Consideration application:
- i. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity (other than to represent or participate in state, national or international sporting or cultural events);
  - ii. recreational travel (domestic or international);
  - iii. planned events, such as, weddings.

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(7) Special Consideration refers to those situations where a student wishes to formally advise UWSCollege that they have suffered unforeseen severe and/or grave illness, misadventure, accident, or have extenuating circumstances, and, as a result, have:

- a. been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline;
- b. performed below their usual standard during an assessment, including formal examinations; or
- c. been unable to attend a compulsory component of their unit.

(8) Teaching session refers to the time from the first week of lectures up to the commencement of the end of session examinations.

(9) Designated Head of Program refers to a Head of Program who has been delegated the responsibility for assessing applications for Special Consideration for that teaching session and for determining outcomes.

## SECTION 3 - POLICY STATEMENT

### The Policy

(10) The policy applies to students enrolled in UWSCollege Foundation Studies and Diploma courses including on-shore, off-shore and external-study students. The policy refers to both the teaching session and the formal examination period.

(11) The policy addresses Special Consideration requests from students who are affected by short-term illnesses or serious misadventure during a teaching session and the formal examination period. Special Consideration should not be utilised repetitively in order to manage longer-term illness, disabilities or ongoing severe disruptive circumstances. In such circumstances students should refer to UWS's [Disability Policy](#) and should seek advice from staff in Counselling and Disability Services.

(12) Students with disabilities should contact [Disability Services](#). Students can also access a UWSCollege Student Adviser, in the first instance, and then a University Counsellor, Student Welfare Officer or Student Advocate for information, advice, support and referral. Special Consideration provisions apply to all UWSCollege students including those registered with [Disability Services](#).

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(13) It is the student's responsibility to notify UWSCollege of illness, misadventure or extenuating circumstances and to obtain documentation which demonstrates the severity and/or gravity and timing of the circumstance. The documentation should also demonstrate how the misadventure has disrupted previously satisfactory work by a student during the teaching session.

(14) On the basis of the information provided by the student, the following may be taken into account:

- a. the severity of the event;
- b. the student's performance of other items of assessment in the unit;
- c. history of previous applications for Special Consideration.

(15) All staff who deal with Special Consideration applications are required to maintain confidentiality of information presented by students.

### **Delegations to Approve Special Consideration**

(16) Assessment that "serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances" has been proved and documentary evidence provided: Designated Head of Program.

(17) Determine outcomes, other than a re-assessable fail, of all requests for Special Consideration: Designated Head of Program

(18) Award of a re-assessable fail as the outcome of a Special Consideration application: the Head of Program.

(19) Approve or dismiss applications for a Deferred Examination: Manager, Academic Pathway Programs.

## **SECTION 4 - PROCEDURES**

### **Part A - Applications**

(20) Applications should be made on the appropriate form available on the web or from the Student Centre:

- a. Special Consideration During Teaching Session
- b. Final Examination Special Consideration Application
- c. Deferred Examination Application

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d. Final Deferred Examination Special Consideration Application

with supporting documentation attached that demonstrates the nature and severity of the illness, serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances (see clause 6). Students may indicate in their application their preferred outcome of the Special Consideration (see clauses 35 — 45). Forms are to be lodged at the Student Centre.

(21) The Designated Head of Program will review documentation and assess whether the extenuating circumstances criteria are demonstrated and if so, make a judgement on the Special Consideration request outcome or forward the application to the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs for determination of eligibility for a Deferred Examination.

(22) Applications must be submitted no later than 5.00 p.m. on the first working day that the student is deemed fit to resume studies. Students who can provide evidence to support extenuating circumstances affecting submission of the application may be granted permission to submit applications after this time.

(23) A request for Special Consideration for an examination relates to situations where a student:

- a. believes their studies and academic work have been adversely affected so that they will be unable to perform in the examination at their usual standard;
- b. was unable to complete a formal examination due to ill health or other cause.

(24) A request for a Deferred Examination should only be made in exceptional circumstances where the severity and/or gravity of misadventure, accident or illness is of such an extreme nature that the student will not be able to sit the examination and where a rescheduling of the examination is demonstrated to be the only reasonable option. The College will not consider cases where a student is unable to attend an examination due to circumstances such as a vacation, ceremony or family event.

(25) Students who believe their examination performance has been affected by ill health may request Special Consideration. A Deferred Examination will not be granted if a student has entered the examination room.

(26) Access to a Deferred Examination is a privilege determined on a case-by-case basis. It is not a right. A Deferred Examination is a significant concession to a student.

(27) Students should note that the fact of submitting an application does not automatically mean that Special Consideration or a Deferred Examination will be granted.

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## Acceptable Documentation for Applications

(28) Appropriate documentation is required to verify claims made in any Special Consideration application. Information should relate to relevant provisions of this policy.

(29) All applications should be submitted using the relevant application form, with any supporting documentation or request for confidentiality attached. The application forms are available from the UWSCollege Student Centre.

(30) Documentation and certificates signed by family members will not normally be accepted. Documents must be in English, and if not, supplied with a certified translation.

(31) If medical information is provided, it should have sufficient detail so that the severity and gravity of the condition in relation to teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks can be reasonably ascertained. The medical practitioner should be asked to complete the UWSCollege medical proforma available in the Student Course Handbook or if the medical practitioner chooses to provide their own medical certificate, the medical information on the certificate must address the same requirements as those listed in the College's application form. The documentation must clearly indicate:

- a. the date on which the student first sought attention and information about further visits if appropriate;
- b. the severity and/or gravity of the condition, degree of incapacity and its duration or probable duration in relation to the student's capacity to study, sit an examination or complete an assessment task;
- c. within the limits of confidentiality, a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problem.

(32) The College's proforma can also be used to provide supporting documentation from other appropriately qualified professionals such as psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists, social workers and counsellors.

(33) For causes other than sickness, (e.g. road accident, court hearing or death of a relative) written evidence (e.g. a police report, a court summons, or a death certificate) is acceptable. Where supporting documentation is not immediately available, students must submit the Special Consideration form within the time-period and provide the relevant documentation as soon as it becomes available. (Clause 22 provides details of circumstances where the period may be extended.)

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(34) Documentation relating to serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances should provide evidence to support the claim and indicate the severity and/or gravity of the circumstances, and the extent of the impact on the student. Where the extenuating circumstances have arisen from substantial changes to financial situations the application should be supported by documentation.

(35) Students should note that Special Consideration requests or requests for Deferred Examinations will normally not be considered if documentation does not provide sufficient information to support the claims made in the application. UWSCollege will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, etc, to obtain documentation on behalf of the student. UWSCollege may seek verification from these agencies that the certificate has been issued to the student.

## **Part B - Outcomes**

### **During the Teaching Session**

#### **Special Consideration for an Assessment Task in One Unit of Study**

(36) Where the Designated Head of Program determines that Special Consideration will be granted for an assessment task, the outcome may include:

- a. no action;
- b. setting a different (but academically equivalent) assessment task;
- c. granting an extension of time to complete an assessment task;
- d. omitting the assessment task from the final grade calculation.

(37) The Designated Head of Program is required to document their determinations, giving reasons only in relation to this policy, and to regularly report their determinations to other Heads of Program and the Academic Program Middle Management Committee.

#### **Special Consideration for Part or the Whole of the Teaching Session**

(38) For Special Consideration for part or the whole of the teaching session, the application should be submitted as soon as the student is aware that he/she has extenuating circumstances that will affect studies for the session.

(39) The Designated Head of Program may interview the student where this would assist in making their decision. The Designated Head of Program may consult with the relevant Head of Program and/or the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs, if necessary.

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(40) Where the determination is that Special Consideration will be granted for the whole unit, the outcome may include:

- a. no action;
- b. granting an 'R' Re-assessable Fail grade. Where a re-assessable fail grade is granted, this must be approved by the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs;
- c. setting a different (but academically equivalent) assessment task or tasks;
- d. marks obtained for completed assessment tasks may be aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage;
- e. omitting an assessment task from the final grade calculation;
- f. granting an extension of time to complete assessment tasks;
- g. giving the student a final grade of 'I' to be resolved by no later than the next census date;
- h. exemption from attendance at compulsory residential school, practical sessions, etc.

(41) The College will notify the student via their UWS email address (copied to the TRIM record keeping system) of the determinations made on requests for Special Consideration within two working days following the determination.

(42) All papers relating to the requests including recommendations, reasons and decisions will be retained by the College for a minimum of 18 months following the final decision.

(43) The Designated Head of Program will present a summary at the end of each teaching session to the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs for the Academic Program Coordinator / HOP meeting.

### **During the Formal Examination Period**

(44) These procedures apply to formal end of session College examinations only, not examinations conducted during the teaching session.

(45) The Designated Head of Program will consider the application for Special Consideration and have the authority to uphold or dismiss Special Consideration requests during the formal examinations period.

(46) If a Special Consideration application is upheld, the Designated Head of Program will, in consultation with the relevant Head of Program, recommend to the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs the most appropriate accommodation/action that should be taken in response to the student's circumstances. The recommended outcome may include:

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- a. no action;
- b. granting an 'R' Re-assessable Fail grade. Where a re-assessable fail grade is granted, this must be approved by the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs;
- c. marks obtained for completed assessment tasks may be aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage;
- d. omitting the examination from the final grade calculation;
- e. giving the student a final grade of 'I' to be resolved by no later than the next census date;
- f. recommend the student sit a supplementary examination. Where a supplementary examination is set the school will email the student with details.

## Deferred Examinations

(47) The Manager, Academic Pathway Programs will consider all applications for Deferred Examinations (except for any practical examination requests which will be sent to the Head of Program for decision) and will, for each application, make one of the following determinations:

- a. that the student will be allowed to sit a Deferred Examination and advise the student in writing of the details of the Deferred Examination.
- b. that the final examination deferred application has been rejected, such decision being final and not subject to review.

(48) Deferred Examinations will be held shortly after the normal examination period. The scope, structure and duration of a Deferred Examination for a unit will be the same as the examination for the same unit held in the formal examination period.

(49) Where possible, the student will be notified at least two working days prior to the Deferred Examination.

(50) Where a student cannot sit a Deferred Examination, because the documented duration of the incapacity will extend beyond the period set aside for Deferred Examinations, the College will arrange an alternative assessment task or an individual supplementary examination at a time that suits the student. Note that this option is not available for students whose request for a Deferred Examination has been rejected.

## Students Unable to Attend the Deferred Examination

(51) Where a student has been granted a Deferred Examination but illness or misadventure prevents a student from attending the examination there will be no further deferment of that examination.

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(52) The student should submit the Special Consideration Application form. The Designated Head of Program will assess the application against the criteria for "serious misadventure, accident and extenuating circumstances" and if the application is eligible for Special Consideration forward it to the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs.

(53) The Manager, Academic Pathway Programs will convene a small review panel, comprising the relevant Head of Program and relevant Unit Coordinator, to consider the application. The outcome may be one of:

- a. omitting the assessment task from the final grade calculation;
- b. arranging a supplementary examination, to be run by the College;
- c. setting a different (but academically equivalent) assessment task;
- d. giving the student a final grade of 'I' to be resolved by no later than the next census date.

(54) Students will be notified within five working days following the final decision.

(55) All documentation relating to the Final Examination Deferred Special Consideration requests including recommendations, reasons and decisions will be retained by the College (where a decision was made by the Manager, Academic Pathway Programs) in the TRIM system.

## **SECTION 5 - GUIDELINES**

(56) Nil.

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