

Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Special Consideration Policy

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Summary	This policy explains the circumstances under which a student might apply for special consideration, the various options that are available dependent on the circumstances and the processes to be followed
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Contact	Director
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Distribution	Higher Education
Related documents	Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment
Review date	June 2018
Risk Assessment	As per Attachment 1 to this document.

Document History

Version	Issued	Status	Author	Reason for Change
v0.1	13 November 2015	Draft	Geoff Murphy	Draft document
v0.2	6 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Consolidation of feedback
v0.3	21 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Incorporating feedback from the Policy Review Workshop 21 January 2016
v0.4	27 January 2016	Draft	Geoff Murphy	Post review amendment
v0.5	29 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Minor amendment
v0.6	29 January 2016	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Incorporating feedback from the Policy Review Workshop 28 January 2016
v1.0	24 February 2016	Final	Mark Wilbourn	As approved by Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Governing Council

Issued under the authority of the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Governing Council

Special Consideration Policy

Policy Statement

Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education recognises that there will be serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control which are of such severity or gravity that they may impact adversely academic performance.

Aims and Objectives

1. 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 will not take the form of allocating additional marks, or changing grades without undertaking an alternative assessment.
2. 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.

Overview

3. The policy applies to students enrolled in all postgraduate coursework awards. The policy refers to the teaching session.
4. The policy addresses Special Consideration requests from students who are affected by short-term illnesses or serious misadventure during a teaching session. Special Consideration should not be utilised repetitively in order to manage longer-term illness, disabilities or ongoing severe disruptive circumstances.

5. This policy does not cover the situations where a student:
- has been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline; or
 - 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 Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment.

Definitions

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.
- 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:
 - medical conditions or events;
 - psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event;
 - physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident;
 - financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control;
 - substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status beyond the student's control;
 - substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control.
 - The following factors would not normally be considered as contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances:
 - routine demands of employment and employment-related travel;

2. difficulties adjusting to student life, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;
 3. stress or anxiety normally associated with assessment tasks or any aspect of course work;
 4. routine financial support needs;
 5. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work;
 6. difficulties with English language;
 7. 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:
1. 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;
 2. military commitments where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise;
 3. military reserve commitments where a student is required to attend a compulsory exercise;
 4. emergency service commitments only where a student is required to attend an emergency situation and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
 5. 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;
 6. 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:
1. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity (other than to represent or participate in state, national or international sporting or cultural events);

2. recreational travel (domestic or international);
 3. planned events, such as weddings.
7. Special Consideration refers to those situations where a student wishes to formally advise Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education 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; or
 - c. been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course.
8. Teaching session refers to the time from the first week of teaching up to the end of semester.

Procedures

9. It is the student's responsibility to notify Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education, Education Support Office, 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.
10. 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.
11. All staff who deal with Special Consideration applications are required to maintain confidentiality of information presented by students.

Delegations to Approve Special Consideration

12. Assessment that "serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances" has been proved and documentary evidence provided: Unit Coordinator.

13. Determine outcomes of all requests for Special Consideration (other than a "re-assessable fail"): Teaching and Learning Committee.
14. Award of a re-assessable fail as the outcome of a Special Consideration application: Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Board.

Applications

15. Applications should be made using the appropriate form available on the website, with supporting documentation included that demonstrates the nature and severity of the illness, serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances (see clause 7). Forms are to be lodged with the Education Support Office.
16. The Unit Coordinator will review each application and assess whether the extenuating circumstances criteria are demonstrated and if so, forward the application to the Teaching and Learning Committee for approval.
17. Applications must be submitted no later than 5.00 p.m. on the second working day after the due date of the assessment task. Students who can provide evidence to support extenuating circumstances affecting submission of the application may be granted permission to submit applications after this time.
18. Students should note that the fact of submitting an application does not automatically mean that Special Consideration will be granted.

Acceptable Documentation for Applications

19. Appropriate documentation is required to verify claims made in any Special Consideration application. Information should relate to relevant provisions of this policy.
20. All applications should be submitted using the Special Consideration application form, with any supporting documentation.
21. 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.

22. 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 certificate must clearly indicate:
- the date on which the student first sought attention and information about further visits if appropriate;
 - 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 or complete an assessment task;
 - within the limits of confidentiality, a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problem.
23. Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education's application form can also be used to provide supporting documentation from other appropriately qualified professionals such as psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists, social workers and counsellors.
24. 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 seek approval to provide the relevant documentation as soon as it becomes available. Evidence of approval for late submission of documentation must be submitted at the time of Special Consideration Application lodgement (clause 17 provides details of circumstances where the period may be extended).
25. 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.
26. Students should note that Special Consideration requests will normally not be considered if documentation does not provide sufficient information to support the claims made in the application. Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, etc., to obtain documentation

on behalf of the student. Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education may seek verification from these agencies that the certificate has been issued to the student. Students are required to keep all original or certified copies of supporting documentation for a period of 12 months from the date of submission of their application, as this may be requested at any time by Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education for auditing purposes.

Outcomes

Special Consideration for Part or the Whole of the Teaching Session

27. 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.
28. The Unit Coordinator may interview the student where this would assist in making their decision. Consultation may take place with relevant academic staff if necessary.
29. 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 Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Board (see clause 14 Delegations to Approve Special Consideration);
 - 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 sessions, etc.
30. The student will be notified in writing of the determinations made on requests for Special Consideration within two working days following the determination by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Roles and Responsibilities

31. Decision makers are required to document their determinations, giving reasons only in relation to this policy. The Teaching and Learning Committee will report on its determinations to the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Board.

Related Documents

- Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment

Acknowledgement:

Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education gratefully acknowledges the permission granted by Western Sydney University (WSU) for the use of its policy template and policy content in the development of this publication.

IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST – COMPLIANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

Assessed by:	Date of Assessment:		
IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS	Not commenced	Partial compliance	Full compliance
1.			
	Notes:		
2.			
	Notes: Relevant Director		
3.			
	Notes: TRIM reference number -		
4.			
	Notes:		
5.			
6.			
	Notes:		

Attachment 1

RISK ASSESSMENT

<Document Title>

1.	Policy/Process being assessed	Notes
	Document Number	
	Publication date	
	Scheduled review date	
	Date of this risk assessment	
	Name & position of assessing officer	
2.	Summary of policy purpose (from PD Cover Page)	
3.	Agency (HETI) key roles & responsibilities as per PD	
4.	Risk Assessment	
4.1	<u>Identification of risks</u> – what might happen & how?	
	1.	
	2.	
4.2	<u>Analysis of risks</u> – combined estimate of the consequence & likelihood of the risk, using NSW Health Risk Matrix (attached)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequence: • Likelihood: • Risk rating : 	
4.3	<u>Evaluation of risks</u> – comparison of the level of risk as determined against a predetermined criteria to determine whether a level of risk is acceptable or needs to be treated. Risk level assessed after implementing treatment:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consequence: • Likelihood: • Risk rating : 	
	Evaluation –	

Risk Assessment Approval

Name & position of approving T2 Officer:	
Date:	