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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
Keywords	Extenuating circumstances, special consideration, supporting documentation, consultation, exemption
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Contact	Director
Consultation	as per Document History
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Applies to	Higher Education
Related documents	Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment
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Risk Assessment	As per Attachment 1 to this document.

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

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Special Consideration Policy

Policy Statement

Health Education and Training Institute (HETI) 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 for themselves or for close family members that are 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:

- 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 HETI (HETI) 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.
 - 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:
 1. medical conditions or events;
 2. psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event;
 3. physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident;
 4. financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control;
 5. substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status beyond the student's control;
 6. 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:
 1. 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, 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 HETI 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 HETI Higher Education, Education Support Officer, 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"): Director Education and Training.
14. Award of a re-assessable fail as the outcome of a Special Consideration application: HETI Higher Education Academic Board.

Applications

15. Applications should be made using the Application for Special Consideration Form available on the HETI Higher Education website Forms page <http://www.heti.edu.au/forms>, 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 Officer.

16. The Unit Coordinator will review each application and assess whether the extenuating circumstances criteria are demonstrated and forward the application to the Director Education and Training for determination. If needed, the matter may be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee for determination, but must be referred in relation to a “re-assessable fail”.
17. Applications must be submitted no later than 5.00 pm 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 Supporting Documentation

19. Appropriate documentation is required to verify claims made in any Special Consideration application. Information should relate to relevant provisions of this policy.
20. 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.
21. 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:
 - 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 or complete an assessment task;
 - c. within the limits of confidentiality, a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problem.
22. HETI Higher Education's Application for Special Consideration form can also be used to provide supporting documentation from other appropriately qualified professionals

such as psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists, social workers and counsellors.

23. For causes other than illness, (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 Application for 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 lodgement of the Application for Special Consideration form (clause 17 provides details of circumstances where the period may be extended).
24. 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.
25. Students should note that Special Consideration applications will normally not be considered if documentation does not provide sufficient information to support the claims made in the application. HETI Higher Education will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, etc., to obtain documentation on behalf of the student.
26. HETI 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 HETI 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 HETI 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 by the Director Education and Training of the outcome of their Application for Special Consideration, except in the case of a “Re-assessable Fail” grade, within five working days following the determination.

Appeal

31. Students dissatisfied with the outcome of an Application for Special Consideration should refer to the Student Grievance Procedure for information relating to right of appeal. The Student Grievance Procedure is available on the HETI Higher Education website at: <http://www.heti.edu.au/policies-and-procedures>.

Roles and Responsibilities

32. Decision makers are required to document their determinations, giving reasons only in relation to this policy. All Special Consideration outcomes will be reported to the Teaching and Learning Committee who will report on determinations to the HETI Higher Education Academic Board.

Related Documents

- HETI 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.

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Issued	Status	Author	Reason for Change
v1.0	24 February 2016	Final	Mark Wilbourn	As approved by HETI Higher Education Governing Council
v1.1	22 August 2017	Draft	Valerie Rhodes	Review of delegations
v1.2	10 October 2017	Draft	Mark Wilbourn	Clause 30 and 32 amended clause 31 deleted
v1.2	10 October 2017	Draft	Valerie Rhodes	As endorsed by the Teaching and Learning Committee
v1.2	19 October 2017	Draft	Valerie Rhodes	As supported by the Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Academic Board
v1.3	1 November 2017	Update	Rhonda Loftus	Governing Council review and amendments
v2.0	1 November 2017	Final	Valerie Rhodes	As approved by HETI Higher Education Governing Council
v1.0	22 August 2018	Final	Valerie Rhodes	Updated logos, template and new TRIM Reference

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	
	Special Consideration Policy v1.0		
	Document Number		
	Publication date		
	Scheduled review date		June 2020
	Date of this risk assessment		
	Name & position of assessing officer		
2.	Summary of policy purpose (from PD Cover Page)		
	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		
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:	