

# Special Consideration Policy

## Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education

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| <b>Document Reference Number</b>    | HEP18/23[v2]   |
| <b>Superseded Version</b>           | Special Consideration Policy v2.1  |
| <b>NSWIOP Document Number</b>       | IOPD15/3731[v2]  |
| <b>TRIM Document Classification</b> | Governance   |
| <b>Framework Part</b>               | Part 2 – Course Support Standards  |
| <b>Approval date</b>                | 27 February 2024   |
| <b>Publication date</b>             | 21 January 2025  |
| <b>Summary</b>                      | 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 |
| <b>Keywords</b>                     | Extenuating circumstances, special consideration, supporting documentation, consultation, exemption  |
| <b>Authoring Portfolio</b>          | Mental Health  |
| <b>Contact</b>                      | Director Mental Health Portfolio and Higher Education  |
| <b>Consultation</b>                 | as per Document History  |
| <b>Distribution</b>                 | Higher Education   |
| <b>Applies to</b>                   | Higher Education   |
| <b>Related documents</b>            | Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Assessment Policy – Criteria and Standards-Based Assessment<br>Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Enrolment Policy          |
| <b>Review date</b>                  | February 2027  |
| <b>Risk Assessment</b>              | 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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# Health Education and Training Institute Higher Education Special Consideration Policy

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## 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.

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## Aims and Objectives

1. The underlying principle of this policy is that all students have the right to equity and fairness when undertaking 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.

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## Overview

2. The policy applies to students enrolled in all postgraduate coursework awards.
3. The policy addresses Special Consideration requests from students who are affected by illnesses or serious misadventure during the period of study which have a serious impact on their capacity to be successful in their studies and which are not covered by the Provisions for Extensions of Assessment tasks in the Assessment policy.
4. 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.

## Definitions

6. Serious misadventure refers to 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.
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. been prevented from completing the unit
  - c. performed below their usual standard during an assessment or
  - d. been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course

## Conditions of serious misadventure

8. Serious misadventure includes but is not limited to:
  - a. medical conditions or events
  - b. psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event
  - c. physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident
  - d. financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control
  - e. substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status beyond the student's control
  - f. substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control
9. The following factors would not normally be considered as contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances:
  - a. routine demands of employment and employment-related travel
  - b. difficulties adjusting to student life, to the self-discipline needed to study

- effectively, and to the demands of academic work
  - c. stress or anxiety normally associated with assessment tasks or any aspect of course work
  - d. routine financial support needs
  - e. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work
  - f. difficulties with English language
  - g. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity (other than to represent or participate in state, national or international sporting or cultural events)
  - h. recreational travel (domestic or international)
  - i. planned events, such as weddings
  - j. scheduled anticipated changes of address, moving home, etc.
10. Circumstances which can be grounds for a Special Consideration application other than serious misadventure or accident may also include:
- a. 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
  - b. military commitments where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise
  - c. military reserve commitments where a student is required to attend a compulsory exercise
  - d. emergency service commitments only where a student is required to attend an emergency situation and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation
  - e. 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
  - f. compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature (excluding those specified in Clauses 9 a, g, h, i, j) where the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation from a relevant official or leader of the event/activity

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## Procedures

### Special Consideration for Part or the Whole of the Period of Study

11. Students wishing to make an application for special consideration because of illness, misadventure or extenuating must submit the HETI Higher Education Special

Consideration Form.

12. Students must also submit 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 period of study.
13. HETI Higher Education has given the Associate Director Education and Training responsibility to approve special consideration applications on the basis of
  - a. supporting documentation
  - b. the severity of the event
  - c. the student's performance of other items of assessment in the unit
  - d. history of previous applications for Special Consideration
14. The Associate Director, Education and Training determines the outcome of the application and establishes the conditions for special consideration. The outcome of the applications may be one of the following:
  - a. no action
  - b. setting a different (but academically equivalent) assessment task or tasks
  - c. marks obtained for completed assessment tasks may be aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage
  - d. omitting an assessment task from the final grade calculation
  - e. granting an extension of time to complete assessment tasks
  - f. giving the student a final grade of Incomplete 'I' to be resolved by no later than the next census date
  - g. exemption from attendance at compulsory sessions, etc.
15. The ADET notifies the Cohort Convenor to communicate the result of the application to the student, Learning Pathways Manager and unit Facilitator.
16. The Cohort Convenor records the outcome of the application on the student management system.
17. All staff who deal with Special Consideration applications are required to maintain confidentiality of information presented by students.

### Acceptable Supporting Documentation

18. Appropriate documentation is required to verify claims made in any Special

Consideration application. Information should relate to relevant provisions of this policy.

19. 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.
20. 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
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.

## Appeal

26. Students dissatisfied with the outcome of an Application for Special Consideration can contact the Student Liaison Officer for assistance with the Student Grievance Procedure relating to right of appeal. The Student Liaison Officer's contact details are available on the website. The Student Grievance Procedure is available on the HETI Higher Education website <http://www.heti.edu.au/policies-and-procedures>.

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## Roles and Responsibilities

27. 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.

# 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<br>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   |
| v1.1    | 13 September 2018 | Draft  | Silke O'Callaghan<br>David Baxter | Policy review bringing alignment with Assessment Policy and tightening clauses and restructure.  |
| v1.1    | 22 October 2018   | Draft  | Silke O'Callaghan                 | Endorsed by the Higher Education Academic Board  |
| v1.1    | 21 November 2018  | Draft  | Rhonda Loftus                     | Approved by the Higher Education Governing council   |
| v2.0    | 28 November 2018  | Final  | Jana Chadid                       | Updated Logos, Published Version   |
| v2.1    | 03 February 2020  | Noted  | Susan Grimes                      | Organisational changes; new position title, and responsibilities.<br>Noted by the T&L Committee. |
| v2.1    | 14 February 2020  | Final  |                                   | Published  |
| V2.2    | 27 February       | Edit   | Lorenzo Vigentini                 | Amendments made to organisational titles, branding as approved at HEAB 20240227.                 |

|      |                    |       |   |           |
|------|--------------------|-------|---|-----------|
| V2.2 | 21 January<br>2025 | Final | - | Published |
|------|--------------------|-------|---|-----------|

## IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST – COMPLIANCE SELF ASSESSMENT

| Assessed by:   | Date of Assessment:  |                    |                 |
|--|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| IMPLEMENTATION REQUIREMENTS  | Not commenced  | Partial compliance | Full compliance |
| 1. Presentation of key changes and messages was provided to all key stakeholders   |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b> Training session was conducted Jan/Feb 2019                    |                    |                 |
| 2. Quizzes were conducted to assess all key stakeholders knowledge and application to practice of the updated policy clauses |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b> Relevant Director conducted and assessed the quiz Jan/Feb 2019 |                    |                 |
| 3. Reflection/evaluation; Session of implement progress  |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b> Session planned for June/July 2019                             |                    |                 |
| 4.   |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b>  |                    |                 |
| 5.   |  |                    |                 |
| 6.   |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b>  |                    |                 |
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|  | <b>Notes:</b> Relevant Director conducted and assessed the quiz Jan/Feb 2019 |                    |                 |
| 3. Reflection/evaluation; Training session to assess progress of implementation  |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b> Session planned for June/July 2019                             |                    |                 |
| 4.   |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b>  |                    |                 |
| 5.   |  |                    |                 |
| 6.   |  |                    |                 |
|  | <b>Notes:</b>  |                    |                 |

## Attachment 1 - RISK ASSESSMENT

<Document Title>

| 1.  | Policy/Process being assessed  | Notes     |
|-----|--|-----------|
|     | Special Consideration Policy v1.1  |           |
|     | Document Number  |           |
|     | Publication date   |           |
|     | Scheduled review date  | June 2020 |
|     | Date of this risk assessment   |           |
|     | Name & position of assessing officer   |           |
|     |  |           |
| 2.  | <b>Summary of policy purpose (from PD Cover Page)</b>  |           |
|     | 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.  | <b>Agency (HETI) key roles &amp; responsibilities as per PD</b>  |           |
|     |  |           |
|     |  |           |
| 4.  | <b>Risk Assessment</b>   |           |
| 4.1 | <b><u>Identification of risks</u> – what might happen &amp; how?</b>   |           |
|     | 1.   |           |
|     | 2.   |           |
| 4.2 | <b><u>Analysis of risks</u> – combined estimate of the consequence &amp; likelihood of the risk, using NSW Health Risk Matrix (attached)</b>   |           |
|     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating :</li> </ul>   |           |
| 4.3 | <b><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.</b><br><br>Risk level assessed after implementing treatment:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consequence:</li> <li>• Likelihood:</li> <li>• Risk rating :</li> </ul> <b>Evaluation –</b> |           |

**Risk Assessment Approval**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Name &amp; position of approving T2 Officer:</b> |  |
| <b>Date:</b>  |  |