



The University of Sydney

Report of the Special Consideration Working Party

Special Consideration due to Serious Illness and Misadventure

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Background

1. Establishment of Working Party

At its meeting of 14 November 2001, the Academic Board noted the establishment of a working party to review the University's policy relating to special consideration.

The Teaching and Learning Committee established a Working Party to review the Policy comprising:

Professor Geoff Sherington (Chair), Dean, Faculty of Education
 Associate Professor Scott Kable, Chemistry
 Associate Professor Ian Spence, Pharmacology
 Dr Margaret Edmond, Director, Student Centre
 Mr Tim Robinson, Manager, Archives and Records Management Services
 Ms Janet Jones, Head, Learning Centre
 Ms Patty Kamvounias, Economics and Business
 Ms Sarah Heesom, Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit
 Mr Kristin Barlow, President SUPRA

The Working Party welcomed Mr Roberto Martinez-Neira in 2002 and Mr Matt Hall in 2003 as new SUPRA Presidents for those respective years. Both Associate Professor Scott Kable and Ms Patty Kamvounias were overseas for 2003.

2. The Ombudsman's Report

The Special Consideration Working Party was established to examine the University's policy relating to special consideration, in response to issues raised in the Ombudsman's report and recommendations in relation to improving special consideration provisions for students.

The Ombudsman's recommendations are set out in appendix 4.

3. Process of development and consultation

The Working Party met in February 2002 to examine the special consideration policy the University currently had in place and to compare it to policies being implemented amongst the faculties. It was resolved that by questioning whether these policies were consistent with the Ombudsman's recommendations, the Working Party could identify where policies were not consistent and what needed to be done to make them consistent.

Three main areas of concern from the Ombudsman's recommendations were:

- (1) the application process for special consideration suggested by the Ombudsman was confusing;
- (2) the elongated process of lodging applications for special consideration recommended by the Ombudsman only focused on very serious cases for special consideration and did not elaborate on what the process would be for applications of special consideration which applied to everyday assessment problems such as extensions of deadlines; and
- (3) the duplication and maintenance of records by both the Student Centre and the relevant faculty could compromise the privacy of special consideration documentation.

The Working Party stressed that there was no obligation to agree with all the recommendations made in the Ombudsman's report.

After examining the University's current special consideration policy the Working Party raised concern over the vagueness of the guidelines. The Working Party felt that the terms "misadventure" and "serious illness" used throughout the special consideration policy were ambiguous and needed to be clearly defined.

The issue of medical certificates as support documentation for special consideration claims raised concern and it was suggested that an additional form be supplied. This form could be downloaded from the web for doctors to complete and sign specifying that the student was unable to complete assessment. Using a University form would ensure the University only received the information required to reach a decision.

The Working Party agreed that the current policy needed to be altered to focus on a more centralised set of guidelines which unified the University's approach to special consideration across faculties and emphasised equity for students and support for staff.

At the commencement of the meeting the Working Party had resolved to gather more information about the handling of special consideration within each faculty to establish who was responsible for implementing current policy as well as the maintenance of records. The Student Centre was also to be approached to discover what their process for handling special consideration applications was.

A survey was distributed amongst faculties to assist in clarifying how the current special consideration policy was being implemented.

The survey was circulated to deans of faculties requesting information on:

- current faculty policy relating to special consideration;
- current faculty procedures for implementation of the policy;
- contact details of the person/s with responsibility for special consideration in the faculty; and
- any faculty statistics held for 1999-2000 relating to special consideration, including applications received, applicants successful etc.

The faculties were also provided with a copy of the University's current policy on special consideration for comment or feedback.

In July 2002 the Working Party meet again to discuss faculty responses to the special consideration survey that had been circulated. Responses from faculties had been varied with varying degrees of thoroughness and concern was expressed regarding the confidentiality of special consideration applications, the lack of uniformity in the special consideration process across faculties, and that the only common factor amongst the faculty responses had been the use of the special consideration forms.

It was noted that there could be problems with one special consideration procedure for a whole faculty as different schools interpreted the policy in different ways, and concern was also expressed about the problem of the policy addressing different types of assessment; most of the current faculty policies relating to special consideration only focused on end of year assessment and not on the on-going assessment throughout the year.

After examining all of the faculty responses to the survey, the Working Party noted that the Faculty of Pharmacy had the clearest and most thorough example of faculty procedure, which could be adopted as a model for other faculties to follow.

The Working Party resolved that the following issues needed to be addressed in the University's current policy on special consideration:

- that students are informed about special consideration through their relevant faculties and that the policy must appear in both the University Calendar and on the Web;
- that both students and faculty staff have ready access to university policy;
- that faculties adhere to the University's special consideration policy and do not attempt to recreate their own version;
- that a uniform policy across faculties exists;

- that the definition of special consideration should not include special exam conditions for students with disabilities. The provision of reasonable accommodations for students with a disability is separate from the special consideration process. Students with disabilities who suffer serious illness or misadventure (beyond the disability for which reasonable accommodation has been made) should apply for special consideration as any other student.
- that the terms “misadventure” and “serious illness” are clearly clarified; and
- that information sent to students concerning special consideration applications is in writing to clarify any decision relating to extension periods or further testing.

The Working Party resolved to use the term “academic judgement” instead of successful or unsuccessful when communicating with students about the outcomes of their special consideration application and noted that any decision made about it must be made on academic grounds, by two or more academic staff members. The Working Party stressed that there needed to be an appropriate record kept of how this final decision had been reached. To ensure equity to all students there needed to be set mechanisms for appeal against any decision relating to special consideration and a process of documentation.

At its meeting of 22 October 2002, the Working Party recommended that the following procedures be adopted by faculties relating to the completion of special consideration application forms:

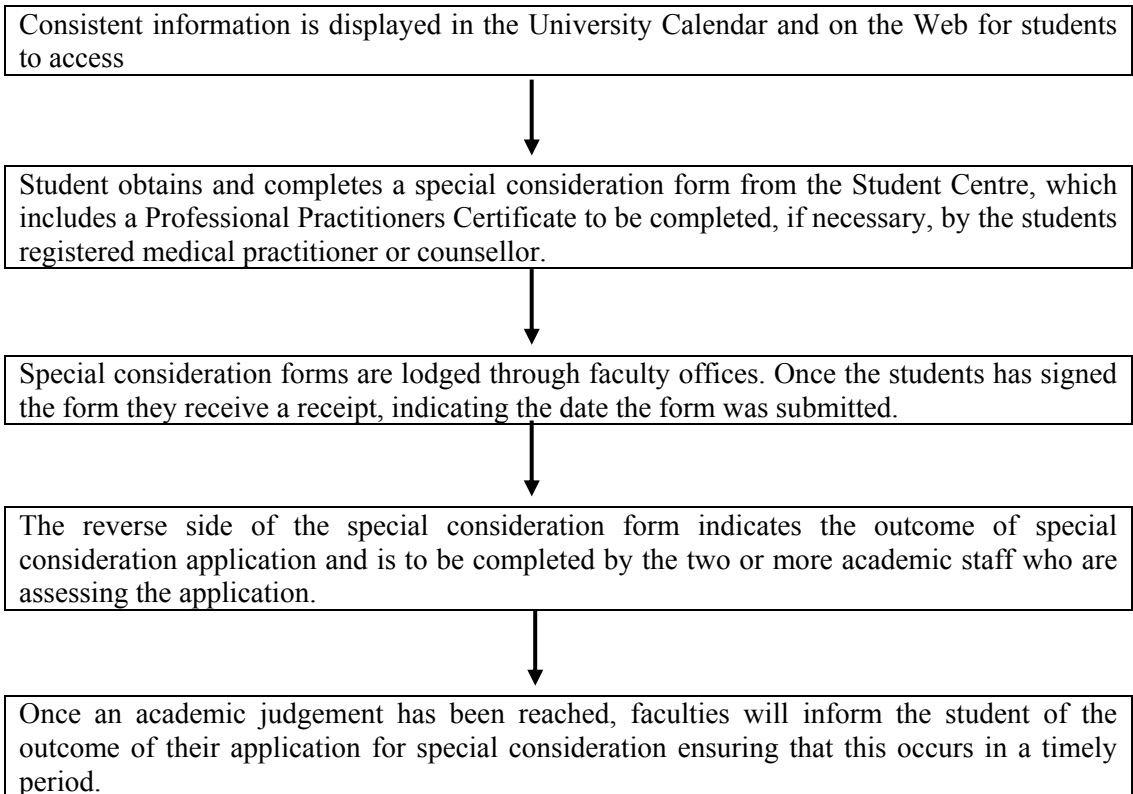
- consistent information will be displayed in the University Calendar and on the Web for students to access;
- students will be able to obtain special consideration forms from the Student Centre and their relevant faculty office, which includes a Professional Practitioners Certificate which the student’s registered medical practitioner or counsellor completes if necessary;
- completed special consideration forms are then lodged through the faculty office, signed by the student and a receipt is retained by the student indicating the date of submission;
- the reverse side of the special consideration form indicates the outcome of the application and is to be completed by the two or more academic staff who are assessing the application; and
- once an academic judgment has been reached, faculties will inform the student of the outcome of their application for special consideration ensuring that this occurs within the specific period set for the reporting of examination results.

At its meeting on 13 November 2002 the Teaching and Learning Committee recommended that the draft Special Consideration policy be circulated to faculties for comment. Faculties, SRC and SUPRA were sent the draft Special Consideration policy for feedback and identification of implementation issues.

The Working Party met on 7 May 2003 to consider all the comments submitted and discussed the following key issues:

- faculty responsibilities;
- processing shifts from the Student Centre to faculties;
- definition of serious illness and misadventure (and other circumstances eg family, cultural, sporting commitments);
- dissemination of policy;
- content of the Professional Practitioners Certificate ; and
- joint and double degrees.

The Working Party amended the policy based on the feedback received and resolved to write to faculties thanking them for their feedback and advising them that the draft policy would be considered by the Teaching and Learning Committee at its meeting of 17 July 2003.

Procedural Flowchart of the Application for Special Consideration

Recommendations of the Working Party

1. Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*

The Working Party **recommends** through the Teaching and Learning Committee that the Academic Board amend Part 5, Special Consideration Due to Serious Illness and Misadventure, of the Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*.

The proposed amendments clarify nomenclature, clearly articulate the application procedure and respond to issues identified in the Ombudsman's report. The amendments are set out in the attached documentation.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board amend Part 5, Special Consideration Due to Serious Illness and Misadventure, of the Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*, with effect from the 1 January 2004, as set out in the report presented on pages 7-13.

2. Special Consideration Application Form

The Working Party **recommends** through the Teaching and Learning Committee that the Academic Board endorse the attached application form for use by students when applying for special consideration.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board endorse *Application for Special Consideration* form as set out in the report presented on pages 14-17.

3. Retention of Special Consideration Application Forms

The Working Party **recommends** through the Teaching and Learning Committee that the Academic Board endorse the retention of special consideration application forms for a minimum of one year as provided by the NSW State Records Authority in keeping with the requirement that information is kept for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the information may lawfully be used.

Recommendation

That the Academic Board endorse the retention of special consideration application forms for a minimum period of one year.

Amendment of the Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework

Part 5 – Special Consideration Due to Serious Illness and Misadventure.

Additions indicated by underline, deletions indicated by strike through.

1. Introduction

- (1) Assessments are designed to provide feedback on performance or to establish that students have achieved an adequate standard to proceed or to graduate. The University's assessment practices are designed to ensure that conditions are fair to all students, as consistent as possible and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control or by the activities of other students.
- (2) Generally, serious illness or misadventure will be taken into account when considering a student's performance in a course or unit of study. ~~It is acknowledged that particular circumstances may have different effects on students from different cultural backgrounds.~~ There is, however, a clear distinction between longstanding illness or difficulties which prevent students from attending classes or completing required work or which seriously interfere with their capacity to study for long periods and short-term illness or misadventure that may prevent a well-prepared student from sitting for an examination or completing a particular assignment.

2. Principles for the dealing with cases of special consideration

The University's approach to cases of special consideration should be:

- (a) Equitable;
- (b) Consistent;
- (c) Procedurally fair;
- (d) Timely
- (e) Effective; and
- (f) Consistent with the University's privacy policy.

3. Responsibilities

(1) Responsibilities of the University

The University has a responsibility and obligation to:

- (a) ensure that its policies on special consideration are publicised to all academic staff and students;
- (b) ensure that its policies on special consideration are implemented and applied consistently across all faculties;
- (c) promote best practice in considering applications for special consideration;

- (d) ensure that fair and well-publicised procedures are applied for the consideration of any cases where students are applying for special consideration.

(2) Responsibility of faculties

The faculties have a responsibility and obligation to:

- (1) develop procedures for considering applications of special consideration which ensure:
- (a) timeliness of consideration of applications of special consideration;
 - (b) fair consideration of applications of special consideration;
 - (c) accurate reporting of how an academic judgment was formed;
 - (d) respect for privacy; and
 - (e) that all parties are informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the application of special consideration.
- (2) ensure consistent application of University policies and faculty procedures both at a faculty and department level;

~~(3)(1) When students experience illness or misadventure, practices in different departments and faculties vary from offering further testing, allowing students who achieved a pass standard to resit if a higher grade was reasonably expected, aggregating and averaging marks already obtained when examinations or assignments have not been completed and/or extending deadlines for assignments.~~

- (3)(2) Each faculty has a responsibility to ensure that there are clear and appropriate processes in place ~~guidelines developed~~, consistent with the University's policies, so that students are treated fairly and equitably. These ~~guidelines~~ processes should be published and displayed on ~~departmental~~ and faculty websites and notice boards in plain English. Faculties have a particular responsibility to ensure that ~~individual departmental~~ policies and practices ~~are consistent~~ are applied consistently throughout the faculty.

- (4)(3) Each faculty has a responsibility to ensure that two or more academic staff are involved in reaching an academic judgment regarding a students special consideration application and that the process of determining that academic judgment is recorded in detail.

(3) Responsibility of Students

Students who, through serious illness or misadventure, are unable to complete an assessment, may ~~be offered~~ apply for special consideration.

Students have a responsibility and an obligation to:

- (a) act in accordance with the principles of special consideration as set out in this Resolution;
- (b) become familiar with University policy and faculty procedures relating to special consideration;

(c) provide the relevant information to their faculty offices as soon as practicable and certainly within one week from the end of the appropriate semester so that an academic judgment of the circumstances and severity of their experiences can be made; and

(d) act honestly when applying for special consideration.

~~(3)(1) Students have a right to ask for such consideration, which will be determined by a department or faculty in accordance with faculty policy. Students have an obligation to know the requirements of their department and faculty in relation to requests for special consideration. Difficulties must be fully documented so that an appropriate evaluation academic judgment of the circumstances and severity of their experiences can be made. Students are required to provide the information to their faculty offices and/or departments as soon as possible.~~

4.3 Procedure Serious illness or misadventure

(1) For serious illness or misadventure during a semester

~~(4)(2)~~ It should be noted that only well-attested serious illness or misadventure during a semester or occurring at the time of an examination will warrant special consideration for academic performance. Occasional brief or trivial illness would not normally be regarded as sufficient to explain an absence or a poor performance and students are discouraged from submitting certificates for absences totalling less than one week, although frequently recurrent short absences would need documentation. While it is important to ask for a medical certificate for serious illness of longer than a few days duration at the time of the first visit, there is no need to submit it unless the illness becomes prolonged or further frequent absences are required. The exact nature of misadventure will vary, but serious illness or death of a close family member, particularly at the time of the examinations, would clearly warrant consideration.

Special Consideration will NOT be given in the following instances:

- (a) occasional brief or trivial illness of a one or two week duration that occur one week or more before an assessment is due or an exam undertaken;
- (b) workloads from other units of study, disciplines and faculties, except where the request for special consideration is made within the first three weeks of semester
- (c) employment where the request for special consideration is made less than four weeks before the date of the assessment;
- (d) illnesses and misadventures that have prevented students from acquiring a Pass level of knowledge/skills (including all illnesses/misadventures resulting in the student missing six weeks or more of lectures or tutorials);
- (e) adequate standards of documentation and processes have not been met;
- (f) requests for extensions for assignments made after the assignment is due or an assessment has taken place (except where the circumstances prevented earlier provision; no special consideration requests shall be processed if submitted more than one week after the assessment);
- (g) the supporting documentation post-dates the period for which special consideration was sought;
- (h) the performance of the student was equivalent or superior to that demonstrated in other assessments in the unit of study; and they pertain to planned commitments, such as elective surgery, holiday or work, where the student could reasonably be expected to have scheduled the commitment or their studies to not adversely affect their studies;

- (i) computer-related problems, except where a police report is provided indicating that burglary or calamity has resulted in the loss of both a computer *and* backups from the students' place of residence (NB: it is assumed that students keep regular back-ups of their work, so theft of a laptop is not grounds for special consideration).
 - (j) Jury Service, Military Service, National Sporting and religious or cultural commitments which prevent a student from attending scheduled examinations would not normally be considered as cases of misadventure. Whilst faculties are encouraged to consider significant religious and cultural events when scheduling examination dates they may make allowances for these circumstances and consider these applications on a case by case basis.
- (5)(3) Students who, because of serious illness or misadventure ~~adverse circumstances~~, are prevented from attending classes for prolonged periods should seek an interview with a ~~member of the department(s) concerned and/or~~ the relevant Sub-Dean. Even if they do not exceed any specified permitted period of absence, they may need to consider whether their best academic interests are served by discontinuing with permission from the course until they are able to resume their studies effectively. International students may need to seek advice regarding visa requirements prior to making any changes to enrolments. Assistance can be sought from the International Office.

5. Procedures

Faculty procedures should include:

- (a) a clear statement about the requirements to provide documentation and where information should be sent or handed in;
- (b) an indication of the use to which medical and other certificates will be put and an indication of when it is appropriate to submit a Professional Practitioner Certificate ~~certificates~~ (see later);
- (c) although it is impossible to outline the possible range, an indication of the seriousness of circumstances that would lead to decisions to allow latitude in handing in assignments or requirements for normally compulsory work;
- (d) in all cases, consistent penalties need be indicated for failure to complete an assignment or for late submission in the absence of an explanation accepted by the faculty ~~or department~~;
- (e) possible arrangements for late submission of assignments when evidence of serious illness or misadventure is provided either beforehand or after the due date, including dates beyond which they would not be considered (eg after return of work to other students);
- (f) if attested absences have occurred, whether marks are aggregated and averaged;
- (g) in the case of serious illness necessitating a substantial absence from classes, the maximum period of absence beyond which the student's work could not be considered completed must be indicated. The period will differ given that faculties ~~or departments~~ may require regular attendance at activities considered essential for successfully completing the program or course (practical classes, clinical work, excursions, group work);
- (h) when marks are awarded for ongoing attendance or participation, an indication should be made of the way in which absence will be handled (both that without adequate excuse and that due to attested serious illness or misadventure);

- (i) any means to make up work missed or to complete assignments not submitted during a prolonged period of serious illness or misadventure must be indicated;
- (j) a process of appeal to the ~~department or~~ faculty against a decision needs to be established and publicised so that appeals can be dealt with rapidly.

~~(2)(7) At the time of an examination~~

~~For serious illness or misadventure during a semester~~

~~Faculty procedures should include:~~

- (k) ~~(a)~~ consistent advice should be given to students who become seriously ill or experience misadventure during the examination period or on the day of the examination (e.g. whether they are best advised to sit if at all possible even if special arrangements are needed - for example through the Health Service - or whether it is considered more appropriate to resit at a later date);
- (j) ~~(b)~~ the means of requesting special consideration in relation to the period of the annual examinations must be specified;
- (l) ~~(c)~~ arrangements for students who fail to sit examinations at the end of first semester or at the annual examinations when evidence of serious illness or misadventure is accepted need to be made clear. For fairness, any retest should be similar to the style of the original examination.

~~(6)(8) After the examination~~

~~(a) in order to ensure consistency and fairness across all the units of study examined, faculties and department will not only make decisions on the acceptability of documentation relating to the examination periods but may also review decisions taken during the year.~~

~~(3)(4) One member of a department (or faculty) should take responsibility for the collection of medical certificates and other documentation to ensure that decisions are made fairly and consistently across the unit.~~

6. Privacy and Record Keeping

The faculty office must retain all special consideration applications and associated documentation for the specific period (see below). Students should be notified promptly if the documentation is inadequate or if the circumstances are not considered sufficiently serious as to warrant leniency.

The records related to applications for Special Consideration contain sensitive personal information, which must be managed in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy and Privacy Management Plan. Access to the information must be limited to those staff who require it in order to carry out their responsibilities. Special Consideration records must be stored securely in a manner that prevents unauthorised access. If sent through the internal mail Special Consideration records must be in sealed envelopes. Special Consideration records must be retained for a minimum of 12 months after last action, and then destroyed in a manner that ensures privacy is not breached. In addition, the proper destruction of Special Consideration records must be appropriately documented by Archives and Records Management Services. Further information on privacy issues may be obtained from www.usyd.edu.au/arms/privacy and questions regarding proper storage, management and eventual destruction of the records should be directed to disposal@rms.usyd.edu.au.

Statistics should be maintained by the faculty office of the total number of special consideration applications submitted, the number of applications that were accepted and the number that were rejected.

~~(3)(5) There is a tendency for students — at least in some faculties — to submit "precautionary" medical certificates for occasional brief absences throughout the semester and/or for trivial complaints occurring at about the time of the examinations. Clear guidelines might reduce the numbers that are submitted without removing the student's right to seek special consideration. For example, students could be discouraged from submitting certificates for an absence of less than a defined period (e.g. one or two weeks). In some circumstances, students fear that they may be disadvantaged if they seek special consideration; faculties and departments have an a obligation responsibility to indicate the ways in which certificates and documents will be used and who will be viewing this documentation.~~

~~(4)(6) Faculties should establish and publish mechanisms for the review of the case of each student who has missed substantial but documented periods during the year. These mechanisms should ensure that the marks and grades of all students experiencing illness or misadventure are dealt with in a consistent fashion by all relevant heads of departments and by the Dean.~~

7. Documentation

~~(1) **Professional Practitioner Certificate** is supplied with the special consideration form and should be completed by a registered medical practitioner, or counsellor for a student whose work during a teaching period or whose performance in an assessment task, including examinations, has been affected by illness or misadventure. Certificates signed by family members are not acceptable.~~

~~The Professional Practitioner Certificate includes:~~

- ~~(a) dates of consultation;~~
- ~~(b) an evaluation by the practitioner, psychologist etc. as to the severity, duration and effect on the student's ability to attend classes, learn or complete assessment requirements;~~
- ~~(c) a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problems, within the limits of confidentiality, so that an academic assessment can be made of the possible effects of the illness or accident on the student's performance;~~
- ~~(d) any other relevant information relating to the student's illness, trauma etc.;~~
- ~~(e) any other documentation that may be relevant; and~~
- ~~(f) the practitioner authorises the University to contact them to confirm the authenticity of the certificate.~~

~~(2) **(1) Medical Certificates** submitted by students in support of applications for special consideration should comply with the following conditions:~~

- ~~(a) The certificate is submitted and signed by the student's own medical practitioner or a practitioner from the University Health Service. The practitioner must have seen the student during an illness or immediately afterwards, when it was first possible to seek help.~~
- ~~(b) Certificates signed by family members are not acceptable.~~
- ~~(c) The certificate indicates the date on which the student first sought attention and further information about the duration of an illness or the after-effects of an accident, and/or further visits if appropriate.~~
- ~~(d) Within the limits of confidentiality, the certificate describes the nature and seriousness of the student's problem, so that an assessment of the possible effects of the illness or accident on performance can be made.~~
- ~~(e) The certificate indicates the degree of incapacity of the student and its duration or probable duration.~~

~~(f) — Certificates submitted in connection with examinations *are submitted before the examination* (or within one week of the examinations if the nature of the illness and the timing of its occurrence prevented submission of the certificate beforehand).~~

~~(g) — In order to be considered certificates concerning an illness occurring at the time of the actual examination generally need to be submitted within one week of the examination period unless circumstances beyond the student's control prevent it.~~

~~(3)(2) — Only those certificates which meet the requirements listed above will be reviewed. No consideration will be given when the condition is seen to be unrelated to performance in the examinations or is considered not to be serious.~~

~~(2)(3) **Other documentation** will depend on the nature of the misadventure, but it should be provided to support the student's account of the circumstances and indicate the likely duration and the effect of the problem on the student's performance.~~

~~(3) (4) The above information is to be publicised in handbooks and displayed in appropriate notice boards and websites. Where substantial absence has been documented during a semester, faculties should establish mechanisms to review each case to ensure that each student has been treated consistently by relevant departments~~

~~5. **Using Documentation**~~

~~(1) — Faculties and departments should indicate to students the likely use of certificates and other documentation submitted. By reviewing current local practices and experiences, departments and faculties can develop policies consistent with the University's guidelines and provide information that is helpful to staff administering courses and to students who find themselves in difficulties.~~

8. *Aegrotat* and posthumous awards

In exceptional circumstances involving serious illness or death, award of *aegrotat* and posthumous degrees and diplomas may be made. In this circumstance, the ~~Head of Department would recommend~~ to the Dean, acting on behalf of the Faculty, ~~who~~ would then authorise the Registrar to certify that the conditions for the award of the degree or diploma had been met.



Guidelines for the Completion of an Application for Special Consideration

The University's assessment practices are designed to ensure that conditions are fair to all students, as consistent as possible and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control or by the activities of other students.

Generally, serious illness or misadventure will be taken into account when considering a student's academic performance in a course or units of study. There is, however, a clear distinction between longstanding illness or difficulties which prevent students from attending classes or completing required work or which seriously interfere with their capacity to study for long periods and short-term serious illness or misadventure that may prevent a well-prepared student from sitting for an examination or completing a particular assignment.

The information you supply on this document is needed by the University so that it can deal with your application for special consideration. This document, and any associated records, will be retained by the relevant faculty. The records will only be available to those staff who need access to it in order to carry out their duties. All records will be destroyed in a secure manner at the appropriate time. Any request to access and/or correct the information should be addressed to the faculty office, in the first instance.

To apply for special consideration

1. Obtain a special consideration form from the relevant faculty office, faculty website or the Student Centre
2. Complete this special consideration application form
 - For consideration due to serious illness have a registered medical practitioner or counsellor complete the Professional Practitioners Certificate
 - For consideration due to misadventure attach the appropriate documentation.
3. Lodge this form with the relevant faculty office
4. Applications must be received within one week from the end of the period (i.e. assignment due date or date of examination) for which consideration is sought
5. Students must retain their receipt (at the bottom of this page) that will be given upon lodgement of this form with the relevant faculty office
6. Students will be notified of the academic judgment concerning their special consideration application.



The University of Sydney

Draft

Application for
SPECIAL CONSIDERATION
due to serious illness or misadventure

THIS FORM SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE RELEVANT FACULTY OFFICE AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE AND CERTAINLY WITHIN ONE WEEK FROM THE END OF THE PERIOD FOR WHICH CONSIDERATION IS SOUGHT.

SID

Period for which special consideration is sought

□□□□□□□□□□

from □□-□□-□□□□ to □□-□□-□□□□
day month year day month year

Surname: _____ First name: _____ Other names: _____
BLOCK LETTERS

Address: _____ Postcode _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Degree: _____ Year:(1,2,3,etc) _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Indicate work for which special consideration is requested, including relevant due dates.

Units of study	Exam, Essay, Practical, Tutorial, Other	Due date

Please state briefly the reason for your application in your own words

✂ -----
Special consideration application received

Signed _____
(Faculty office)

Signed _____
(Student)

Date ____/____/____

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Professional Practitioners Certificate

To be completed by a registered medical practitioner or counsellor for student whose work during a teaching period or whose academic performance in an assessment item or items, including examinations, has been affected by serious illness or misadventure. The person completing the form should refer to the University's policy (see extract on the rear of this form).

Special Consideration applications must be supported by documentary evidence from an appropriate professional authority (a registered medical practitioner, or counsellor). Certificates signed by family members are not acceptable. Your help providing information about the student's illness or misadventure is appreciated. This information will help the University make a fair and informed assessment about the student's academic performance. The information you provide on this form will be used solely to assess this application.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTITIONER CERTIFICATE

SID: _____ STUDENT NAME: _____

Date/s of consultation: _____

Please indicate your evaluation of the severity, duration and effect on the student's ability to attend classes, learn, retain and/or complete assessment requirements:

Severity (please tick appropriate boxes)	Specify period/duration		
	√	from	to
Totally unable to study			
Very severely affected			
Severely affected			
Moderately affected			
Slightly affected			
Unable to assess			

Plain English description of: nature of illness, symptoms, restrictions on capacity or functionality in their studies and other relevant information (attach additional report or documentation if necessary, bearing in mind privacy requirements)

OTHER (please specify and attach documentation/evidence)

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____ Provider Number _____ Stamp _____

I authorise the University to contact me or my office to confirm authenticity of this document.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Extract from the Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*

Part 5 – Special Consideration Due to Serious Illness and Misadventure.

7. Documentation

- (1) Professional Practitioner Certificate** is supplied with the special consideration form and should be completed by a registered medical practitioner, or counsellor for a student whose work during a teaching period or whose performance in an assessment task, including examinations, has been affected by illness or misadventure. Certificates signed by family members are not acceptable.

The Professional Practitioner Certificate includes;

- (a) dates of consultation;
- (b) an evaluation by the practitioner, psychologist etc. as to the severity, duration and effect on the student's ability to attend classes, learn or complete assessment requirements;
- (c) a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problems, within the limits of confidentiality, so that an academic assessment can be made of the possible effects of the illness or accident on the student's performance;
- (d) any other relevant information relating to the student's illness, trauma etc.;
- (e) any other documentation that may be relevant; and
- (f) the practitioner authorises the University to contact them to confirm the authenticity of the certificate.



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For Faculty Use Only

Academic Judgement regarding application for special consideration due to serious illness or misadventure

This form should be completed by two or more academic staff members within the relevant faculty who act as assessors of the special consideration application.

Name of Student: _____

SID: _____

Assessment(s) for which special consideration is sought

Academic Judgment (indicate reasons for the academic judgment)

Name _____

Name _____

Signed _____
(First Assessor)

Signed _____
(Second Assessor)

Date ___ / ___ / ___

This Document is to be retained for a minimum period of 12 months from the end of the relevant semester.

For Office Use

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1. Date special consideration received: ___ / ___ / ___

2. Date Academic Judgment received: ___ / ___ / ___

3. Date Student notified of Academic Judgment: ___ / ___ / ___

Final Report under Section 26 of the Ombudsman Act

University of Sydney

The Conduct of the University in handling applications for special consideration, complaints against staff and incidental conflicts of interest.

Ombudsman's Recommendations

Improving 'Special Consideration' Provisions for Students

- 7.1 I recommend that** the University (and all other universities in NSW) adopt a university-wide special consideration policy that incorporates provisions consistent with the model policy set out below:
- A. This special consideration policy applies to all departments of the University, requiring them to ensure uniform procedures, criteria and results.
 - B. No application will be considered unless it is on the standard form that ensures all relevant information is provided including detailed reasons and supporting documentation such as medical certificates and any application for confidentiality.
 - C. All applicants must lodge via the student centre which will retain a copy and forward the application to the department which runs the course for which consideration is sought.
 - D. Criteria for the assessment of applications must include:
 - (a) The actual magnitude of the impact of the circumstances grounding the application on the applicant's capacity to fulfil one or more specific course requirements.
 - (b) Whether the consideration sought is of a magnitude that compromises the academic integrity of an award of a pass or higher result in the relevant course
 - (c) The extent to which the circumstances were beyond the applicant's control and the extent of any contributing negligence on the applicant's part in producing the circumstances
 - (d) Whether the consideration sought would in any way unfairly advantage the applicant as against other students enrolled in the relevant course
 - E. Where the applicant is on the basis of extraordinary stress, it must be accompanied by at least one and preferably two supporting statements from a qualified counsellor or medical practitioner preferably employed by, or if not, approved by the University.
 - F. Applicants must be considered by a panel of at least two staff of the rank of lecturer or above, one of whom should be from the department in whose courses the applicant is not enrolled.
 - G. Where appropriate, for example where the validity of the applicant is at issue, the panel shall interview the applicant.

- H. The panel's recommendation on an application, together with brief written reasons that address at least any relevant standard criteria, shall be lodged with the student centre which shall retain a copy and forward the recommendation to the chairperson of the full examiners meeting for the relevant course.
- I. The decision on the panel's recommendation shall be made by the relevant course examiner meeting (or where a decision is required before completion of a course, by the course executive committee) and a record of it lodged with the student centre.
- J. Where the reasons for the application are so personal as to warrant confidentiality:
 - (a) All panel members shall be apprised of all details of an application
 - (b) Where the panel unanimously agrees the reasons for the application should remain confidential, the reasons need not be provided to the course examiners meeting (or course executive committee) which may accept the panel's unanimous certification that the undisclosed reasons justify its recommendation
 - (c) When a panel is not unanimous regarding the need for an applicant's reasons to remain confidential to the panel, a qualified counsellor or medical practitioner preferably employed by, or if not, approved by the University shall be asked to provide a written expert report to the panel
 - (d) If after receiving this expert report the panel can still not achieve unanimity the applicant shall be given the choice of either withdrawing the application or giving written permission for the application and the expert report to be given to the course examiners meeting for final determination.
- K. All staff are obliged to preserve the confidentiality of all information in special consideration applications to which they have access. This obligation is to be included in relevant codes of conduct.
- L. Copies of each application and corresponding recommendations, reasons and decisions shall be retained by the student centre for a minimum of three years following the final decision.