Higher Education Special Consideration Procedure

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Purpose

The purpose of this Procedure and linked Guidelines is to outline processes students can access to reduce the impact on their studies of factors and events that may disadvantage them. This procedure supports and mandates the implementation of Federation University Australia's Students and Support for Students Policy. It expands on the principles outlined in the policy as they relate to special consideration and provides guidance on processing and granting special consideration to eligible students.

Special consideration is designed to address short-term, unexpected circumstances impacting student's studies. For ongoing or permanent conditions, including a medical condition or caring for someone with a disability, students should make an appointment with Accessibility Services to learn about available support options. Accessibility Services provides assistance for students with ongoing medical, physical or mental health needs.

Scope

This procedure applies to all students enrolled in undergraduate and coursework postgraduate courses, seeking special consideration. Higher Degree by Research students are excluded from this procedure and should refer to the HDR Examinations procedure. **Students studying at our offshore Partner locations only:** note that the submission of a Special Consideration application differs at these locations. Information on the process for these locations is provided in the Procedure.

Legislative Context

- Federation University Australia Act 2010
- Federation University Australia (Students) Regulations 2022
  - Part 2 - Admission to become a student
    - Division 1 - Selection
    - Division 3 - Enrolment
    - Division 5 - Assessment
  - Part 5 - Student Misconduct
    - Division 2 - Academic and research misconduct by students
    - Division 6 - Summary and emergency sanctions
- Federation University Australia Statute 2021
  - Part 8 - Awards, Titles and Honorary Degrees
    - Section 41 - Conferring of awards
    - Section 43 - Testamur
    - Section 52 - Withholding of results and exclusion
- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability Standards for Education (2005)
- Privacy Act (1988)
- Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (as amended), Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001 and National Code of Practice 2018
- Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Definitions

A complete list of definitions relevant to this procedure is contained within the Policy Glossary.

Term	Definition
Discretionary Assessment Extension	An assessment extension of up to 5 University working days for one assessment and granted at the discretion of the lecturer or unit coordinator upon request by the student. Lecturers and unit coordinators should also proactively offer discretionary extensions if they become aware of a student's circumstances.
Deferred Examination	An examination held in the timetabled deferred examination period. An examination can be deferred a maximum of two times per unit.

HE Special Consideration	A supplementary assessment, extension of an assessment due-date or altered attendance or placement requirements where possible. Such allowances may be made for one or more assessment tasks or units within any teaching semester.

Actions

1. Confidentiality and Privacy

Any Special Consideration Applications received will be treated by all parties as strictly confidential – refer Information Privacy Procedure.

Information forming part of the Special Consideration Application shall only be discussed by university staff with, or made available to, a person who is:

- A party to the application;
- Is or has been legitimately involved in the management of that application; or
- Has a formal management role in following up the consequences or implications of the application.

Discretionary Assessment Extensions and Special Consideration applications and all relating documentation will be stored in accordance with privacy legislation.

University staff must be aware of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality, which may include disciplinary action under the Staff Code of Conduct.

2. Communicating Discretionary Assessment Extensions and Special Consideration procedure / forms

	Activity	**Responsibility**	**Steps**
A.	Communicating via Unit Description	Unit Coordinator	1. All Unit Descriptions will include important information relating to Discretionary Assessment Extensions and Special Consideration.
B.	Communicating via Federation University website	Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing	1. The University has developed a Special Consideration webpage which is managed and maintained by the Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing and outlines all aspects of the Procedure as it affects students.
C.	Communicating during the teaching period	Lecturers	1. Lecturers will proactively communicate discretionary extensions at a class and individual level.

3. Requesting a Discretionary Assessment Extension

A Discretionary Assessment Extension is an application for a short-term extension (up to five working days) on one assessment task. If a longer extension is being sought, or extensions for multiple assessments or units, the student is required to apply for Special Consideration General (Action 6-10)

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Applying for Discretionary Assessment Extension	Student	1. Review the Special Consideration webpage to review the information required to request an extension. • **Note:** request must be submitted no later than two working days prior to the assessment submission date
B.	Submit completed Discretionary Assessment Extension Application form and supporting documentation (if applicable) or 'request extension' via email	Student	1. Access the Discretionary Extension Form via My Student Centre [Link to instructions]. **Students studying at our offshore partner locations only: please download the relevant form from the forms tab then submit your completed application and supporting documentation to the partner administration team.** 2. Complete all required fields on the form. 3. Provide documentation to support the Discretionary Extension application. • Student may submit documentation to support their discretionary assessment extension request (includes, but not limited to medical certificate, assessment drafts or evidence of progress, evidence of group-work difficulties) if applicable. 4. Submit the form via the online forms process no later than two working days prior to the assessment submission date and outline the length of the extension you are requesting

			(up to 5 University working days) and the reason for this request. 5. NOTE: Students who are experiencing family violence are encouraged to contact student Counselling Services.

4. Assessing a Request for a Discretionary Assessment Extension

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Assess the request	Lecturer/Unit Coordinator/Partner Academic Coordinator	1. Lecturer / Unit Coordinator / Partner Academic Coordinator to assess the request and make a decision at their own discretion based on the details of the request. The Lecturer / Unit Coordinator / Partner Academic Coordinator may request drafts of the assignment to assist in their decision making and/or assist in being able to support the student further.

5. Notifying the Result of the Request for a Discretionary Assessment Extension

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Notify the Student	Lecturer/Unit Coordinator/Partner Academic Coordinator	1. Lecturer / Unit Coordinator / Partner Academic Coordinator to notify the student in writing, by email, of the outcome of their request within one University working day of receipt including the revised submission date.

6. Applying for Special Consideration - General

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Completing the Special Consideration form	Student	1. Access the relevant form via My Student Centre [Link to instructions]. **Students studying at our offshore Partner locations only: please download the**

			relevant form from the forms tab then submit your completed application and supporting documentation to the partner administration team. 2. Complete all required fields on the form. 3. Select the grounds for the application and specify the assignment/task/class and length of time that their studies have been affected 4. Provide documentation to support the Special Consideration application. • **Note:** If a student has been advised to apply for special consideration by their unit coordinator, the student must attach the recommendation to their application. 5. Submit the form via the online forms process.
B.	Collating supporting documentation	Student	1. Provide documentation to support their application, which could include, but is not limited to: • Medical Certificate or other document which includes a specific statement that in the health care professional's opinion that, as a result of the complaint or treatment, the student is impacted or unfit or unable to undertake the assessment. • Statutory Declaration • Death Notice • Evidence of employment commitments • Evidence of childcare commitments or family caring responsibilities (which may be a Statutory Declaration) • Police report

			• Defence Reserve Service Notification • Jury Service notification • Emergency Service (e.g., CFA) notification • Traumatic experience evidence such as a police report or Statutory Declaration (e.g. involvement in or witnessing a serious accident, a serious crime committed against the student,witness to a serious crime, witness to and/or experiencing family violence) evidence. • Family violence documentation can include but is not limited to documentation from support agencies such as Berry Street, WRISC, CAFS counsellor. Students are encouraged to contact Federation University's counselling services for support. The Counselling Service can then provide documentation on the student's behalf to avoid disclosing specifics around sensitive matters when applying for special consideration. • Where students experience significant technical and/or platform issues whilst completing online tests through a locked-down browser (or equivalent), sufficient and appropriate evidence must be provided to support the request for a special consideration. • Evidence may include a capture of the screen which clearly indicates the entire display, with all text and on-screen errors (where applicable) clearly visible. Where the resolution of the image is

			insufficient, multiple zoomed images may be included along with the image displaying the entire screen. • **Note:** As cameras, phones etc. are not permissible during most assessments, it is still reasonable for a student to leave their testing area to retrieve a device in order to gather evidence to support their submission. Should the student resume the test, the device must be removed before doing so. 2. Collect supporting documentation and attach to the Special Consideration application. 3. Where a student identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, this may also include a Cultural wellbeing plan or a support letter from the Aboriginal Education Centre team.
C.	Lodging a complete application	Student	1. Lodge the application via the online process no later than five University working days after the class, assessment date. 2. The recommended method for lodging the application and supporting documentation is in the following ways: • Online: Submit the application and supporting documentation via the online form process in My Student Centre. • **Partner Provider students**: Submit their application and supporting documentation via the online form process in My Student Centre. • **Please note:** Students studying at Offshore Partner locations will be required to email the form and supporting documents to

			the partner administration team. 3. Applications submitted via the online process will receive an automated confirmation of submission via email with a link to their application via MySC. 4. Applications submitted to the partner administration team will receive a reply email confirming submission/receipt of the application within 1 day.

7. Applying for Deferred Examination

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Submit the Deferred Examination form	Student	1. **Early Applications:** Students can submit a completed Deferred Examination Application before the examination date. If you have not received notification prior to your examination date you **should not** attempt the examination. 2. **Other Applications:** Students must submit their Deferred Examination Application no later than three University working days after the date of the examination. A request for a deferred examination can be made for a maximum of two times for each unit. A third request for the same unit will not be considered. 3. **Students studying at our offshore Partner locations only:** please download the relevant form from the forms tab then email your completed application and supporting documentation to the partner administration team. 4. Students who are severely/ moderately unwell on the day of their scheduled examination **should not** attempt the

			examination; their next step is to apply for a deferred examination. 5. Complete all required fields on the form. 6. Select grounds for the application and specify the length of time their studies have been affected. 7. Provide documentation to support their Deferred Examination application. 8. Submit the Deferred Examination application via the online form with supporting documentation, no later than three University working days after the date of the exam. 9. Students who are unable to finish their exam due to the onset of serious illness or other eligible cause must: • Inform the exam invigilator, who will note the time of exit and the reason associated. • Submit the Deferred Examination application.
B.	Collating supporting documentation	Student	1. Provide documentation to support their application, which could include, but is not limited to: • Medical Certificate or other document which includes a specific statement that in the health care professional's opinion that, as a result of the complaint or treatment, the student is impacted or unfit or unable to undertake the assessment. • Statutory Declaration • Death Notice • Evidence of employment commitments • Evidence of childcare commitments or family caring responsibilities

			(which may be a Statutory Declaration) • Police report • Defence Reserve Service Notification • Jury Service notification • Emergency Service (e.g., CFA) notification • Traumatic experience evidence such as a police report or statutory declaration (e.g. involvement in or witnessing a serious accident, a serious crime committed against the student, witness to a serious crime, witness to and/or experiencing family violence) evidence. • Family violence documentation can include but is not limited to documentation from support agencies such as Berry Street, WRISC, CAFS counsellor. Students are encouraged to contact Federation University's counselling services for support. The Counselling Service can then provide documentation on the student's behalf to avoid disclosing specifics around sensitive matters when applying for special consideration. • Where students experience significant technical and/or platform issues whilst completing online tests through a locked-down browser (or equivalent), sufficient and appropriate evidence must be provided to support the request for a special consideration. • Evidence may include a capture of the screen which clearly indicates the entire display, with all text and on-screen errors (where

			applicable) clearly visible. Where the resolution of the image is insufficient, multiple zoomed images may be included along with the image displaying the entire screen. • Note: As cameras, phones etc. are not permissible during most assessments, it is still reasonable for a student to leave their testing area to retrieve a device in order to gather evidence to support their submission. Should the student resume the test, the device must be removed before doing so. 2. Collect supporting documentation and attach to the Deferred Examination application. 3. Where a student identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, this may also include a Cultural wellbeing plan or a support letter from the Aboriginal Education Centre team.
C.	Lodging a complete application	Student	1. Lodge the application via the online process no later than three University working days after the approved submission of the assessment task. 2. The recommended method for lodging the application and supporting documentation is in the following ways: • **Online:** Submit the application and supporting documentation via the online form process in My Student Centre. • **Partner Provider students:** Submit their application and supporting documentation via the online form process in My Student Centre. **Please note:** Students studying at Offshore Partner

			locations will be required to email the form and supporting documents to the partner administration team. 3. Applications submitted via the online process will receive an automated confirmation of submission via email with a link to their application via MySC. Applications submitted to the partner administration team will receive a reply email confirming submission/receipt of the application within business 1 day.
D.	Confirm supporting documents have been submitted with the application.	Student Administration	1. If the application is lodged without adequate documentation supporting the circumstances relating to the request, return the form and request supporting documents additional supporting information before their application can be assessed. 2. **Students have five working days from being contacted to submit supporting documentation via the online form process otherwise the application will be withdrawn.**

8. Assessing the Application for Special Consideration/Deferred Examination

	Activity	**Responsibility**	**Steps**
A.	Reviewing and assessing the application	Student Administration, Partner administration team, Course Coordinator or delegate	1. Special Consideration – Student Administration/partner administration team review applications to ensure they are complete and that supporting documents meet the grounds and timeframes for special consideration. If application is incomplete request additional documentation from the student, clearly outlining information required.

			If a student has been advised to apply for special consideration by their unit coordinator, the student must attach the recommendation to their application. These applications will be forwarded to the course coordinator for assessment. Course Coordinator or delegate receives the complete application from Student Administration/partner administration team via the online process in MySC. 2. Deferred Examination – Student Administration/partner administration team assess and approve a deferred exam if application meets the grounds and timeframes for deferred exam. • **NOTE:** If it has been verified that the documents submitted with application are fraudulent, the following steps should be taken: • Collate evidence and forward to Course Coordinator with the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and relevant Institute appeals team cc'd with the following: • Confirmation of fraud in writing (where applicable) • PDF full special consideration form • Copy of fraudulent documentation • Copy of the completed Academic Misconduct Report Form 3. Assess eligibility for special consideration and deferred exams. Consider the grounds as listed on the website (Special consideration - Federation University

			Australia), including the following key factors: • The type of condition/ circumstances • The impact of the condition/ circumstances on their ability to undertake their unit/course. • The duration of time that their ability to undertake unit/course is impacted • The specific request made by the student • The strategies that the student has identified that they will implement in combination with the Special Consideration application to minimise the impact on study of the condition/circumstance in the future (if applicable). • The recommendations made by the Health Care Professional (if applicable). • The recommendation made by the unit or course coordinator (or relevant academic staff member). • The recommendations by the Aboriginal Education Centre, where a student identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. • **Note:** Course Coordinators should liaise with unit coordinators to determine if there are any implications for group-based tasks when making decisions. 4. Make a professional assessment regarding the outcome of the Special Consideration Application based on all evidence presented. 5. Finalise outcome. Select either:

			• 'Approved' and outline the outcome decisions that have been granted. • 'Not approved' and outline detailed reasons for the decision on the online form.

9. Notifying the Applicant

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Notifying the Applicant	Student Administration/Partner administration team	Provide notification using the email template, to the applicant of the outcome of the Special Consideration application, including any alternative arrangements, or reasons for a not-approved outcome, made via their Federation University student email. Student must be informed within five (5) University working days.
B.	Recording the outcome	Student Administration/Partner administration team	Provide a note in fdlGrades outlining the outcome for the special consideration request which includes the name of the person who undertook the assessment.

10. Notifying the Institute

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Contact all academics identified in the application to inform them of an approved application for Special Consideration (General or Deferred Examination)	Course Coordinator or delegate for special consideration Student Administration/Partner administration team for deferred exams Student	1. Course Coordinator/Student Administration/partner administration team to contact all lecturers including relevant partner provider staff for partner provider students and/or examinations unit identified in the applications to inform them of an approved application for Special Consideration. 2. Student to **contact the relevant academic staff** to finalise the adjustments to their assessment in accordance with their application (if applicable).

			Contact should be within two working days from return to studies.

11. Appealing the Outcome

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Lodging an appeal	Student Student Advocacy Student Appeals Committee	1. Students may lodge an appeal against a Special Consideration outcome within 30 days of the adverse decision. Appeals must be submitted, in writing, to the Student Appeals Committee via their online portal. 2. Students must ensure they include all relevant documentation to support their appeal. 3. Students are encouraged to get support with the appeals process, lodging an appeal and preparing for a hearing. Students may also get support with an appeal from: Student Advocacy Phone: 03 5327 6105 Email: studentadvocacy@federation.edu.au URL: https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services/student-advisory-service/appeals/appeals-to-appeal-committee Executive Officer, Student Appeals Committee Phone: 03 5327 6139 Email: student.appeals@federation.edu.au

			URL: https://federation.edu.au/staff/governance/appeals-committee

Supporting Documents

- Academic Governance Policy
- Students and Support for Students Policy
- Higher Education Assessment (inclusive of FedTASKs) Procedure
- Family and Domestic Violence Procedure
- Appeals to the University Appeals Committee Procedure
- Accessibility Learning Access Plan (LAP) Procedure
- Higher Education Examinations Procedure

Forms.

- Discretionary Extension Form (PDF 736.6kb)
- Health Care Professional Certification Form (PDF 690.6kb)
- Higher Education Special Consideration - Deferred Examination Application Form (PDF 819.4kb)
- Higher Education Special Consideration - General Application Form (PDF 815.4kb)

Responsibility

- Chief Learner Experience Officer, as the Approval Authority, is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Director, Student Services and Registrar, as the Document Owner, is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by Approval Authority.
- Senior Manager, Student Wellbeing is responsible for the administration support for the maintenance of this procedure as directed by the Director, Student Services and Registrar.

Promulgation

The Higher Education Special Consideration Procedure will be communicated throughout the University via:

- An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy.
- Learning and Teaching Quality Committee
- Institute/School meetings
- Academic Induction Program
- Student Health & Wellbeing meetings
- Student Senate meeting

Implementation

The Higher Education Special Consideration Procedure will be implemented throughout the University via:

- An Announcement Notice via FedNews website and on the 'Recently Approved Documents' page on the 'Policies, Procedures and Forms @ the University' website to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy
- Moodle module

Records Management

Document Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Application for Special Consideration and supporting documentation.	For electronic records, the University's approved records management or student management system. Where hard copy, records should be stored on the student file.	Executive Dean	Destroy 7 years following completion, withdrawal or deferment of course.
Decision documentation and notification of outcome	For electronic records, the University's approved records management or student management system. Where hard copy, records should be stored on the student file.	Executive Dean	Destroy 7 years following completion, withdrawal or deferment of course.
Appeal Application and supporting documentation	Appeals Committee filing system	Appeals Committee Executive Officer	Retain as per relevant Appeals Committee disposal class