

Special Consideration Policy

Purpose

This policy establishes the principles and processes by which ICAT will assess and determine requests for special consideration in relation to missed assessments due to compassionate or compelling circumstances with regard for college rules, the Higher Education Standards Framework 2015, and the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*.

This policy does not address grievances related to academic matters such as academic progression, grading matters or academic misconduct, or non-academic matters (*refer to the **Complaints and Appeals Policy***).

Scope

Illness, misadventure, or other compelling circumstances beyond a student's control may prevent them from submitting or completing an assessment event. In these circumstances, a student may apply for special consideration. This application is accessible to all students.

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following college policies and documents:

- Application for Special Consideration
- Application to Suspend Enrolment for a Leave of Absence
- Assessment Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy
- Misconduct Policy
- Monitoring Academic Progression Policy
- Request for Extension

All college policies and any associated forms referenced in this document can be on the Institute's website in [Forms and Policies](#).

Definition of Key Terms

"Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances" means circumstances beyond the control of a student which have an impact on their ability to study or complete an assessment event, which include but are not limited to:

- serious medical condition or injury
- bereavement of a close family member such as parents, grandparents, siblings, children
- major political unrest or natural disaster that requires immediate travel
- a traumatic experience such as an accident, crime or being a witness to these experiences
- military service or jury service
- severe disruption to domestic arrangements or homelessness
- imprisonment

Eligibility for Special Consideration

A lecturer may allow short extensions for assessments. Where a student requires a short extension for an assessment, they should submit a Request for Extension form.

Student Responsibility for Learning and Academic Progress

Students must take charge of managing circumstances outside of their studies that could potentially affect their academic progress. This includes balancing work commitments, personal responsibilities, and recreational activities in a way that prioritizes academic success. It is imperative that students make proactive and informed decisions to mitigate potential disruptions to their studies.

In case of unforeseen challenges or difficulties, students are expected to communicate promptly with their lecturers, Student Services and any relevant advisors to seek appropriate assistance or accommodations.

At ICAT, we are committed to your success and will provide the support you need. However, it's crucial to remember that your education is a partnership, and your active engagement and management of your learning and personal circumstances are essential for your academic progress.

Missed Assessment or Exam

If a student missed submitting an assessment or sitting an exam due to compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond their control, they may be eligible for special consideration.

The grounds for compassionate or compelling circumstances may include, but not be limited to:

- serious medical condition or injury
- bereavement of a close family member, such as parents, grandparents, siblings, children
- major political unrest or natural disaster that requires immediate travel
- a traumatic experience such as an accident, crime or being a witness to these experiences
- military service or jury service
- severe disruption to domestic arrangements or homelessness
- Imprisonment

Compassionate or compelling circumstances do not include:

- Minor illness or ailments: regular colds, headaches, minor injuries, or other minor health issues that are easily treatable and do not significantly impair a student's ability to study.
- Personal events or issues: birthdays, weddings, or relationship issues are typically not considered compassionate or compelling circumstances.
- Travel: general travel, holidays, or visits from family/friends.
- Work commitments: in most cases, work commitments or job changes are not considered compassionate or compelling circumstances.

- Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of course requirements or deadlines. Students are expected to be familiar with their course requirements and deadlines, and lack of awareness or misunderstanding of these is generally not considered a compelling circumstance.

Deferred Assessment

A student may request an assessment (including exams) to be deferred for a period of time due to illness or misadventure, or other approved reason.

Planned or Unplanned Leave

Planned or unplanned leave for three weeks or less of any study period will require an Application for Special Consideration. Any student in these circumstances must consult the Director of Education and read the Monitoring Academic Progression Policy, as well as complete an Application for Special Consideration. Provisions will then be made with consultation from the Director of Education and the unit lecturer to ensure the student can continue to academically progress through their unit.

Planned or unplanned leave for four or more weeks of any study period will require the student to take a Leave of Absence or Voluntary Suspension of Study. Any student in these circumstances must consult the Director of Education and read the Monitoring Academic Progression Policy and Deferral, Suspension and Cancellation of Enrolment Policy as well as complete an *Application to Suspend Enrolment for a Leave of Absence* form. Students who apply for this pre-census will face no academic or financial liability. However, if a student applies after the census date for that study period, they may incur financial and academic penalties. Individual circumstances will be assessed by the Office of the Registrar and the Director of Education.

Reasonable Adjustment

Students who have a Provision of Reasonable Adjustment in place do not have to apply for special consideration or extension when submitting assessments and must refer to the considerations and extensions already built into their adjustment. However, should their request for deferral of an assessment/exam, request for special consideration for an assessment/exam or extension for submission of an assessment/exam exceed the period listed in their adjustment, they will then need to submit a Request for Special Consideration. If a student has a three-day extension to all assessment deadlines in their adjustment, but due to illness/misadventure needs a five-day extension, they then must submit an Application for Special Consideration. As a single occurrence this will be assessed on its own merit, however, should it occur again, the student will need to meet with the Director of Education so that their Provision of Reasonable Adjustment can be discussed and revised if needed.

Timeframes for Lodgement

Any requests for special consideration or a deferred assessment must be made by submitting an *Application for Special Consideration Form* with Student Services.

For a missed assessment or exam, a request for special consideration must be lodged within **three** working days after the submission deadline.

For a request for special consideration, in advance of the submission deadline, an application must be lodged within **ten** working days.

Where the circumstances do not allow a request for special consideration to be made in the timeframes above, a request will not be disregarded as long as a reasonable case for the delay can be provided. Accepting late applications is at the discretion of the Course/Program Coordinator, with consultation from the Director of Education. Under no circumstances, will applications be received after the publication of final results.

For more information on how to lodge a request for special consideration or deferred assessment, and the process by which applications will be assessed, see [Applying for Special Consideration](#).

Applying for Special Consideration

a. Lodge a Request for Special Consideration

Responsible: Student

Students wishing to make a request for special consideration must do so in writing by lodging an 'Application for Special Consideration Form' with Student Services **within three working days** of the missed assessment or exam. An 'Application for Special Consideration Form' can be completed online through [Forms and Policies](#).

The application must be completed in full very clearly setting out the basis for the request and must attach at least one or more of the following documents in support of the application:

- medical certificate or letter from a medical professional, who is not a family member
- letter from a social worker, lawyer, or psychologist, who is not a family member
- death notice or certificate and evidence of the family relationship
- police report
- statutory declaration from relevant people to the circumstances
- jury summons notice
- notification from the Department of Defence, Department of Justice or Emergency Services

Medical certificates and letters of support from social workers, lawyers or psychologists must meet the following criteria to be accepted by the Office of the Registrar:

- must be issued by a registered medical practitioner, social worker, lawyer, or psychologist
- state the student "is unfit for class" due to a medical condition or other compelling circumstance
- state the length of time the student is unfit for class
- include their contact details and date of the consultation (or compelling circumstances)
- must be original certificates and/or letters

All applications for special consideration will be dealt with confidentially. If the student however does not feel comfortable discussing the specifics of their medical condition, the medical certificate or letter from the student's psychologist must outline the serious impact of the circumstances on the student's ability to study but the specifics may remain confidential.

Where an application is made outside the timeframes stated above, the documentation must include explanation as to the extenuating circumstances for the delay in lodgement. Late applications will be assessed at the discretion of the Course/Program Coordinator with consultation from the Director of Education.

The 'Application for Special Consideration Form' should be lodged with Student Services. An 'Application for Special Consideration Form' will not be accepted if it has not been completed in full, signed and attaches the required supporting documentation as outlined above.

Lodging an application for special consideration does not guarantee the request will be granted. If a student completes the assessment, they are not eligible for special consideration.

b. Review and Assessment of a Request for Special Consideration

Responsible: Office of the Registrar & Course/Program Coordinator

The Office of the Registrar will forward the completed application to the Course/Program Coordinator within forty-eight hours of acceptance. The Course/Program Coordinator will assess the application in accordance with college policies, having consideration for the following:

- the nature of the compassionate or compelling circumstances; and
- the timing of the circumstances and/or application with respect to the assessment

c. Determination of the Decision and Outcome

Responsible: Course/Program Coordinator

Each request for special consideration will be assessed on its merits.

The Course/Program Coordinator will conclude their assessment within three working days of the acceptance of the completed application and will advise their decision and the outcomes in writing within two working days of the decision:

- i.** Where it is found that there are grounds for compassionate and compelling circumstances, special consideration will be granted and one of the following outcomes will apply:
 - an extension of time
 - an alternative but equivalent form of assessment
 - a deferred date for an assessment

- ii.** Where it is found that there are no grounds for compassionate and compelling circumstances, special consideration will be denied.

d. Notification of the Decision and Outcome

Responsible: Office of the Registrar

In all cases, ICAT will provide a written notification advising the decision and outcome of all applications for special consideration. Where the application is denied, the student will also be advised of the reasons for the decision and their right to appeal.

The notification will be sent by email within five working days of the receipt of your completed application. It is your responsibility to check your student email account. It is vital that you are aware of the decision in the event a new time or assessment task has been assigned as a result of special consideration being granted.

The student has the right to appeal the college decision and should refer to the college **Complaints and Appeals Policy** for the procedure on how to deal with grievances. Any grievances must be lodged within five working days of the date of their notification.

Where the request for special consideration is made by an international student and the decision to deny may affect their course progression or ability to complete their course in their recorded duration, ICAT will not report any changes in PRISMS during the appeal period. However, if any subsequent appeal is unsuccessful, ICAT will report the change to enrolment to the Secretary via PRISMS within five working days of end of the appeal process in accordance with Standard 8 of the National Code 2018.

Academic Integrity

Students must be truthful and transparent in their special consideration applications. This includes not only being honest about their circumstances but also providing accurate supporting documentation. Providing false or misleading information in an attempt to gain an advantage is a violation of academic integrity. Examples of such behaviour might include exaggerating the impact of an illness, providing a fraudulent medical certificate, or making false claims about personal circumstances. For more information, see the Institute's *Misconduct Policy*. At ICAT, we take exemptions, applications for extension, special consideration and adjustments seriously, in order to maintain academic integrity, and ensure a fair and level playing field for all students.

Should you require further information when completing an *Application for Special Consideration* please reach out to Student Services. Should you require assistance when completing the application, please reach out to your Academic Support Advisor and/or Student Support Advisor for support in doing so.

Change and Version Control

Version	Date Approved	Authored by	Approved by	Description
1.1	11 August 2020	Dean	Academic Board	Approved, by previous ownership
28042023 (1.1)	4 May 2023	QA Manager	Director of Education	ICAT Letterhead
1.2	24 Aug 2023	Director of Operations and Compliance	Academic Board	Addition to related policies and documents, Student Responsibility for Learning and Academic Progress, Planned/Unplanned Leave, Reasonable Adjustment, Academic Integrity

Policy Information

Author:	Director of Operations and Compliance
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