

Governance Institute of Australia

Special Consideration Policy

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Summary	This policy explains the circumstances under which a student might apply for special consideration, the various options that are available dependent on the circumstances and the processes to be followed.
Authoring Department	Education
Contact	General Manager, Education
Applies to	Higher Education
Distribution	External
Related documents	Governance Institute of Australia Assessment Policy Governance Institute of Australia Examinations Policy Governance Institute of Australia Student Grievance Policy
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Issued under the authority of Governance Institute of Australia Board of Directors

Governance Institute of Australia

Special Consideration Policy

Policy Statement

Governance Institute of Australia (hereafter referred to as Governance Institute) recognises that there will be serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control which are of such severity or gravity that they may impact adversely academic performance.

Aims and Objectives

1. To pass subjects students must demonstrate that they have achieved the subject learning outcomes; merely applying for Special Consideration on the basis of serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances will not demonstrate that the learning outcomes have been achieved. Granting Special Consideration recognises extenuating circumstances, and, as required, provides alternative ways in which a student may be assessed, so they are not disadvantaged (see Assessment Policy and Examinations Policy). Granting Special Consideration for assessment tasks will not take the form of allocating additional marks, or changing grades without undertaking an alternative assessment.
2. The underlying principle of this policy is that all students have the right to equity and fairness when undertaking the assessment components of their studies. The policy has been instituted to support students who would under normal circumstances reach their usual demonstrated performance level but are significantly affected by serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances for themselves or for close family members that are beyond their control.

Overview

3. The policy applies to students enrolled in all postgraduate subjects.
4. The policy addresses Special Consideration requests from students who are affected by short-term illnesses or serious misadventure during a teaching session. Special Consideration should not be utilised repetitively in order to manage longer-term illness, disabilities or ongoing severe disruptive circumstances.

5. This policy does not cover the situations where a student:
- a. has been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline; or
 - b. has been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course except where serious misadventure is the cause.

These situations are covered in guidelines that are part of the Assessment Policy.

Definitions

6. Serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances affecting a student or close family member is any unexpected event that is outside a student's capacity to prevent or overcome. The student must present evidence that the misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances 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 subject.
- a. Factors contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances, misadventure or accident, must directly relate to the timing of subject teaching/learning and/or assessment requirements. These can include:
 1. medical conditions or events;
 2. psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event;
 3. physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident;
 4. financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control;
 5. substantial change to routine employment arrangements or status beyond the student's control;
 6. substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control.
 - b. The following factors would not normally be considered as contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances:
 1. routine demands of employment and employment-related travel;
 2. difficulties adjusting to student life, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;

3. stress or anxiety normally associated with assessment tasks or any aspect of course work;
 4. routine financial support needs;
 5. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work;
 6. difficulties with English language;
 7. scheduled anticipated changes of address, moving home, etc.
- c. Circumstances which can be grounds for a Special Consideration application other than serious misadventure or accident may also include:
1. sporting or cultural commitments only where a student has been selected, through a formal documented process, to represent or participate in a state, national or international event;
 2. military commitments where a student is a member of the armed forces involved in a compulsory exercise;
 3. military reserve commitments where a student is required to attend a compulsory exercise;
 4. emergency service commitments only where a student is required to attend an emergency situation and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
 5. legal commitments, where a student is called for jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal or hearing, and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
 6. compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature (excluding those specified in clause 6d) where the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation from a relevant official or leader of the event/activity.
- d. The following circumstances would not normally be regarded as grounds for a Special Consideration application:
1. demands of sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity (other than to represent or participate in state, national or international sporting or cultural events);
 2. recreational travel (domestic or international);
 3. planned events, such as weddings.

7. Special Consideration refers to those situations where a student wishes to formally advise Governance Institute that they have suffered unforeseen severe and/or grave illness, misadventure, accident, or have extenuating circumstances, and, as a result, have:
 - a. been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline;
 - b. performed below their usual standard during an assessment; or
 - c. been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course.
8. Teaching session refers to the period incorporating the teaching weeks and examination week. Currently there are two teaching sessions (semesters) in each academic year.

Procedures

9. It is the student's responsibility to notify Governance Institute's Education Department of illness, misadventure or extenuating circumstances and to obtain documentation that demonstrates the severity and/or gravity and timing of the circumstance. The documentation should also demonstrate how the misadventure has disrupted previously satisfactory work by a student during the teaching session.
10. On the basis of the information provided by the student, the following may be taken into account:
 - a. the severity of the event;
 - b. the student's performance in other items of assessment in the subject;
 - c. history of previous applications for Special Consideration.
11. Special Consideration applications are managed by the Education Department only, ensuring that information presented by students remains confidential to the Education Department.

Delegations to Approve Special Consideration

12. Assessment that "serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances" has been proved and documentary evidence provided: Education Department.
13. Determine outcomes of all requests for Special Consideration (other than a "re-assessable fail"): General Manager, Education.

14. Award of a “re-assessable fail” as the outcome of a Special Consideration application:
Governance Institute Education Committee.

Applications

15. Applications should be made using the Application for Special Consideration Form available on Governance Institute’s website, with supporting documentation included that demonstrates the nature and severity of the illness, serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances (see clause 7). Forms are to be lodged with the Education Department.
16. The Education Department will review each application and assess whether the extenuating circumstances criteria are demonstrated and forward the application to the General Manager, Education for determination. If needed, the matter may be referred to the Education Committee for determination, but must be referred in relation to a “re-assessable fail”.
17. Applications must be submitted no later than 5.00pm AEST/AEDT on the second working day after the due date of the assessment task. Students who can provide evidence to support extenuating circumstances that additionally affect the submission of the application itself may be granted permission to submit applications after this time.
18. Students should note that the fact of submitting an application does not automatically mean that Special Consideration will be granted.

Acceptable Supporting Documentation

19. Appropriate documentation is required to verify claims made in any Special Consideration application. Information should relate to relevant provisions of this policy.
20. Documentation and certificates signed by family members will not normally be accepted. Documents must be in English, and if not, supplied with a certified translation.
21. If medical information is provided, it should have sufficient detail so that the severity and gravity of the condition in relation to teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks can be reasonably ascertained. The medical certificate must clearly indicate:
 - a. the date on which the student first sought attention and information about further visits if appropriate;

- b. the severity and/or gravity of the condition, degree of incapacity and its duration or probable duration in relation to the student's capacity to study or complete an assessment task;
 - c. within the limits of confidentiality, a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problem.
22. Governance Institute's Application for Special Consideration form can also be used to provide supporting documentation from other appropriately qualified professionals such as psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists, social workers and counsellors.
23. For causes other than illness, (e.g. road accident, court hearing or death of a relative) written evidence (e.g. a police report, a court summons, or a death certificate) is acceptable. Where supporting documentation is not immediately available, students must submit the Application for Special Consideration form within the time-period and seek approval to provide the relevant documentation as soon as it becomes available. Evidence of approval for late submission of documentation must be submitted at the time of lodgement of the Application for Special Consideration form (refer to clause 17).
24. Documentation relating to serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances should provide evidence to support the claim and indicate the severity and/or gravity of the circumstances, and the extent of the impact on the student. Where the extenuating circumstances have arisen from substantial changes to financial situations the application should be supported by documentation.
25. Students should note that Special Consideration applications will normally not be considered if documentation does not provide sufficient information to support the claims made in the application. Governance Institute will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, etc., to obtain documentation on behalf of the student.
26. Governance Institute 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 Governance Institute for auditing purposes.

Outcomes

Special Consideration for Part or the Whole of the Teaching Session

27. For Special Consideration for part or the whole of the teaching session, the application should be submitted as soon as the student is aware that he/she has extenuating circumstances that will affect studies for the session.
28. The General Manager, Education may interview the student where this would assist in making their decision. Consultation may take place with relevant academic staff if necessary.
29. Where the determination is that Special Consideration will be granted for the whole subject, the outcome may include:
 - a. no action;
 - b. granting a “re-assessable fail”. Where a “re-assessable fail” is granted, this must be approved by Governance Institute’s Education Committee (see clause 14, Delegations to Approve Special Consideration);
 - c. setting a different (but academically equivalent) assessment task or tasks;
 - d. marks obtained for completed assessment tasks may be aggregated or averaged to achieve a percentage;
 - e. omitting an assessment task from the final grade calculation;
 - f. granting an extension of time to complete assessment tasks.
30. The student will be notified in writing by the General Manager, Education of the outcome of their Application for Special Consideration, except in the case of a “re-assessable fail”, within five working days following the determination.

Appeal

31. Students dissatisfied with the outcome of an Application for Special Consideration should refer to the Student Grievance Policy for information relating to right of appeal. The Student Grievance Policy is available on Governance Institute website.

Roles and Responsibilities

32. Decision makers are required to document their determinations, giving reasons only in relation to this policy. All Special Consideration outcomes will be reported to the Governance Institute Education Committee.

Related Documents

- Governance Institute of Australia Assessment Policy
- Governance Institute of Australia Examinations Policy
- Governance Institute of Australia Student Grievance Policy

Acknowledgement:

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