

POLICY NUMBER:	2.8.1	VERSION NUMBER:	6.0
DATE LAST REVIEWED:	November 2025	NEXT REVIEW DATE:	November 2026
RELATED POLICIES:	Critical Incident Policy Complaints and Appeals Policy Disability Policy Reasonable Adjustment Policy	RESPONSIBILITY: Academic Council	
RELATED PROCEDURES:	Complaints and Appeals Procedure		

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

1.0 Purpose

This policy establishes the framework and principles for granting special consideration to students who experience serious, short-term and unforeseen circumstances that adversely affect their academic performance or ability to meet course requirements. It ensures equitable treatment of all students while maintaining academic integrity and compliance with relevant higher-education and international-student legislation.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all higher-education students (domestic and international) enrolled in any course or subject delivered by the College, across all campuses and modes of study.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 Special consideration is an equity measure designed to ensure that assessment and progression decisions take into account unexpected and adverse circumstances genuinely beyond a student's control.
- 3.2 Adjustments must preserve the validity and comparability of assessment outcomes and learning standards.
- 3.3 Determinations must be supported by verifiable documentation demonstrating that circumstances were beyond the student's control.
- 3.4 Decisions are made according to clearly defined criteria and may be reviewed through the College's complaints and appeals framework.
- 3.5 The College will maintain alignment with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth).
- 3.6 For students studying in Australia on a student visa, special consideration includes *compassionate or compelling circumstances* as defined in the *National Code 2018*, which may affect course progress, attendance or wellbeing. Examples include:
 - Serious illness or injury, supported by medical evidence;
 - Bereavement of an immediate family member;
 - Major political upheaval or natural disaster requiring travel or temporary absence;
 - Sudden loss of financial sponsorship; or
 - Involvement in or witnessing of a serious accident or crime, supported by official documentation.



4.0 Exemptions from this Policy

This policy does not apply to:

- 4.1 Financial matters such as withdrawal without financial liability, which are addressed under the Remission of Financial Liability due to Special Circumstances Policy
- 4.2 Campus closures resulting from natural disasters or other large-scale emergencies, which are managed under the Critical Incident Policy. Students are not required to apply for special consideration during any official closure period, but may do so if ongoing impacts continue to affect their studies once normal operations resume; and
- 4.3 Non-academic circumstances where consideration is sought for extenuating personal or administrative matters, which are managed under the relevant policy.

5.0 Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Academic Council	Approves the policy and monitors its effectiveness.
Dean – Higher Education	Ensures consistent application of the policy across all courses and oversees implementation across academic and student support teams.
Heads of Department and Academic Staff	Evaluate and determine applications for special consideration in line with policy principles and maintain academic integrity in decision-making.
Student Services and Wellbeing Teams	Provide guidance on application requirements, documentation standards, and refer students to appropriate support services such as the Access and Equity Program.
Students	Submit applications with accurate, complete, and verifiable evidence as soon as practicable after the circumstance arises and comply with any follow-up requirements.

6.0 Eligibility and Grounds

- 6.1 The College recognises categories of serious adverse and unforeseeable circumstances outside a student's control as acceptable grounds for applying for special consideration.
- 6.2 Unforeseen or exceptional circumstances may include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:
 - acute illness or serious injury on the day of an examination or during the period immediately leading up to an examination or assessment due date
 - bereavement or other serious emotional disturbance, e.g. witnessing or being the victim to a serious crime, sudden loss of accommodation or family violence
 - acute illness or serious injury of a close relative
 - unexpected carer responsibilities
 - unexpected employment commitment or relocation
 - unanticipated personal circumstances of a compelling nature
 - unexpected unavoidable commitments or adverse circumstances outside of student control
 - an accident, bereavement, or other compassionate and compelling circumstances
 - unanticipated and significant financial circumstances of a compelling nature
 - sporting commitments for recognised elite athletes



- religious observance or obligations, formal legal commitments, military service, service with a recognised emergency management service.
- 6.3 Discretionary activities or circumstances within the student's control, for example attendance at sporting events (with the exception of approved elite athletes with sporting commitments), holidays, family celebrations and other discretionary travel, and / or other foreseeable events will not normally constitute grounds for special considerations.
- 6.4 Supporting evidence for unforeseen or exceptional circumstances must be verifiable.

International Students studying on a student visa

- 6.5 'Compassionate or compelling' circumstances are generally those beyond the control of the overseas student and which have an impact upon the overseas student's course progress or wellbeing.
- 6.6 These could include, but are not limited to:
- serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the overseas student was unable to attend classes
 - bereavement of close family members such as parents, siblings, or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided)
 - sudden withdrawal of financial support from a third party sponsoring the student's studies in Australia
 - major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring the overseas student to travel home and this has impacted on the overseas student's studies; or
 - a traumatic experience, which could include:
 - involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime, and this has impacted on the overseas student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports).
- 6.7 The special circumstances for each application will be assessed and determined on the detail and evidence provided.

7.0 Outcomes

Where special consideration is granted, outcomes may include:

- Extension of an assessment due date;
- Deferral or resit of an examination;
- Provision of an alternative or replacement assessment of equivalent weighting and learning outcomes;
- Temporary adjustment to attendance or participation requirements; or
- Withdrawal without academic penalty where continuation is not feasible.

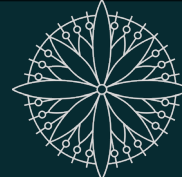
All outcomes must preserve academic integrity and be applied consistently with associated procedures.

8.0 Appealing a special consideration decision

Where a student is unsatisfied with the outcome of a special consideration application, they may appeal via the *Appeal of Academic Decision* process as outlined in the [Complaints and Appeal Policy](#). Appeals must be made within 10 working days of the outcome of their subject grade review application.

9.0 Relevant Legislative and Regulatory Documents

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (Cth)
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)



- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (Cth)
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (Cth)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Privacy Act 1998 (Cth)
- Privacy Amendment (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012

10.0 Version Control History

Version	Date Approved	Approved By	Summary of Changes
1.0	July 2016	College Council	New policy established following separation from <i>Special Circumstances Policy</i> (which now covers only fees and financial liability).
2.0	March 2017	College Council	Substantive update to include natural disasters and clarify exemption processes; replaced outdated references and roles.
3.0	July 2019	College Council	Comprehensive revision: updated definitions, roles, and documentation requirements; incorporated Access and Equity processes and Reasonable Adjustment Policy references.
4.0	May 2021	College Council	Policy review and update: clarified scope of special consideration to include “other circumstances” that may affect study completion; removed Academic Administrator as an approving officer; refined extension provisions to align with Access and Equity privacy requirements and confidentiality standards.
5.0	March 2023	Academic Council	Revised to take account of management of special consideration in new SMS, updates to close gaps in current policy.
6.0	November 2025	Academic Council	Major revision. Policy streamlined to principle-based content; procedural detail relocated to <i>Special Consideration Procedure</i> (2.8.2); renumbered from STU-049 to 2.8.1.