

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROGRAMS SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- 1.1. The College English Language Programs recognises that there may be serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances (including cultural events) beyond a student's control which are of such severity, importance or gravity that they may impact on academic performance.
- 1.2. To pass English courses, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the course level and learning outcomes. Granting Special Consideration recognises extenuating circumstances and provides alternative ways in which a student may be assessed, so they are not disadvantaged. Granting Special Consideration for assessment tasks (including examinations) will generally not take the form of allocating additional marks or changing grades without undertaking an alternative assessment.
- 1.3. 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 is designed 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 beyond their control.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:
 - 2.1.1. Special Consideration – refers to those situations where a student wishes to formally advise The College that they have suffered unforeseen severe and/or grave illness, misadventure, accident, or have extenuating circumstances, and, as a result, have:
 - 2.1.1.1. been prevented from meeting an assessment deadline;
 - 2.1.1.2. performed below their usual standard during an assessment, including formal examinations; or
 - 2.1.1.3. been unable to attend a compulsory component of their course.
 - 2.1.2. Serious Misadventure – accident or extenuating circumstances which are any unexpected event/s that are outside a student's capacity to prevent or overcome that demonstrably affect their capacity to complete teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks or achieve the level of attainment typical of their previous performance in the course. Circumstances which can be grounds for special consideration may include:
 - 2.1.2.1. medical conditions or events, including physical and psychological trauma;
 - 2.1.2.2. financial hardship arising from substantial change to economic circumstances beyond the student's control;

2.1.2.3. substantial unanticipated change to routine accommodation and residential arrangements or status beyond the student's control; and/or

2.1.2.4. compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature.

Circumstances which would not normally be considered as grounds for special consideration may include:

2.1.2.5. routine demands of employment and employment-related travel;

2.1.2.6. difficulties adjusting to university life or studies, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;

2.1.2.7. stress or anxiety normally associated with examinations, required assessment tasks or any aspect of course work;

2.1.2.8. lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work;

2.1.2.9. difficulties with visa arrangements that could have been reasonably anticipated;

2.1.2.10. scheduled anticipated changes of address, moving home, etc;

2.1.2.11. recreational travel (domestic or international); and/or

2.1.2.12. planned events, such as vacation, ceremonies, celebrations and family events.

2.1.3. Examinations

2.1.3.1. Mid-term and Final Examinations – formal, supervised assessment activity used to assess English levels which normally takes place in weeks five (5) and ten (10) of every teaching session.

2.1.3.2. Deferred Examination – an examination granted to a student as a concession for inability to attend the mid or final examination in a teaching session due to serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances. Deferred examinations are held immediately after the Mid-term or Final examinations.

2.1.4. The College - Western Sydney University Enterprises Pty Limited trading as Western Sydney University The College.

2.1.5. The University - Western Sydney University.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

3.1. The Policy

- 3.2. The policy applies to students enrolled in The College English Language Programs courses. The policy refers to the full length of the current course the student is enrolled in.
- 3.3. The policy addresses Special Consideration requests from students who are affected by short-term illnesses or serious misadventure during the current course. Special Consideration should not be utilised repetitively in order to manage longer-term illness, disabilities or ongoing severe disruptive circumstances. In such circumstances, students should refer to the University's Disability Policy and should seek advice from the University's Disability Service.
- 3.4. It is the student's responsibility to notify The College of illness, misadventure or extenuating circumstances and to obtain documentation which demonstrates the severity and/or gravity and timing of the circumstance.
- 3.5. On the basis of the information provided by the student, the following may be taken into account:
 - 3.5.1. the severity of the event;
 - 3.5.2. the student's performance on other items of assessment in the course;
 - 3.5.3. history of previous applications for Special Consideration.
- 3.6. All staff who deal with Special Consideration applications are required to maintain confidentiality of information presented by students.

3.7. Delegations to Approve Special Consideration

- 3.8. The relevant Education Coordinator reviews and makes a recommendation for a decision in accordance with this Policy.
- 3.9. The Head of Program, English Language Programs, determines the outcome in accordance with this Policy.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1. Part A - Applications

- 4.2. Applications should be made on the form available [online](#).
- 4.3. The Education Coordinator will review the Special Consideration request and forward the recommendation to the Head of Programs for approval.
- 4.4. The Head of Programs will make a decision and inform the Education Coordinator, who will provide written notification to the student and document the outcome.

- 4.5. In the case of a student being medically unfit, applications must be submitted on the first working day (e.g. the first working day after the expiration of the medical certificate) that the student is deemed fit to resume studies.
- 4.6. A request for a Deferred Examination should only be made in exceptional circumstances where the student will not be able to sit the examination and where a rescheduling of the examination is demonstrated to be the only reasonable option.
- 4.7. Students should note that submitting an application does not automatically mean that Special Consideration or a Deferred Examination will be granted.

4.8. Acceptable Documentation for Applications

- 4.9. All applications should be submitted using the application form, with any supporting documentation or request for confidentiality attached.
- 4.10. Documentation and certificates signed by family members will not be accepted. Documents must be in English, and if not, supplied with a certified translation.
- 4.11. 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 information on the certificate must clearly indicate:
 - 4.11.1. the date on which the student first sought attention and information about further visits if appropriate;
 - 4.11.2. 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, sit an examination or complete an assessment task;
 - 4.11.3. within the limits of confidentiality, a description of the nature and seriousness of the student's problem.
- 4.12. Supporting documents from other appropriately qualified professionals such as psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered psychologists, social workers and counsellors can also be used to provide supporting evidence.
- 4.13. For causes other than sickness, (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 Special Consideration form within the time-period and seek approval to provide the relevant documentation as soon as it becomes available.
- 4.14. 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 circumstances, the application should be supported by documentation.
- 4.15. Students should note that The College will not approach doctors, hospitals, police, or other relevant authorities to obtain documentation on behalf of the student. The College may seek

verification from these agencies that the certificate / documentation is valid and / or has been issued to the student.

4.16. Part B - Outcomes

4.17. Special Consideration for an Assessment Task in the current course of study

4.18. The Head of Programs will consider the application and recommendation from the Education Coordinator and determine the outcome which may be:

4.18.1. special consideration granted may include:

4.18.1.1. setting a different (but equivalent) assessment task;

4.18.1.2. granting an extension of time to complete an assessment task;

4.18.1.3. omitting the assessment task from the final grade calculation;

4.18.2. no special consideration granted.

4.19. The Education Coordinator is required to inform the student in writing and document the outcome in relation to this policy.

4.20. Special Consideration for the Mid-term and/or Final Examinations in the Current Course of Study

4.21. The Head of Programs will consider the application and judgement from the Education Coordinator and determine the outcome which may be:

4.21.1. special consideration granted, this may include:

4.21.1.1. granting a deferred examination;

4.21.1.2. granting an aggregate or average to achieve a percentage;

4.21.1.3. omitting the examination from the final grade calculation;

4.21.2. no special consideration granted.

4.22. The Education Coordinator is required to inform the student and document the outcome in relation to this policy.

4.23. Appeals

4.24. Students may appeal a special consideration outcome if they believe that due regard has not been paid to the evidence of serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances.

4.25. Appeals should be sent to the Director, English Language Centre, in writing, no later than twenty (20) working days after they were sent the notification of the decision they are

appealing against. The application must include all of the supporting evidence for the appeal.

- 4.26. Late applications will only be considered at the discretion of the Director, English Language Centre, and if there are documented extenuating circumstances that prevented the student from submitting the application on time.
- 4.27. Applications for appeal may only be made on one or both of the following grounds, which must be addressed and evidenced in the application:
 - 4.27.1. where there has been a breach of procedural fairness; or
 - 4.27.2. where the student considers substantial and relevant new information is available that was not available for the student to provide when the decision about the student's case was made.
- 4.28. A response will be provided to the student in writing and the Director's decision will be final.
- 4.29. Students will be informed of the English Language Programs Student Complaint Handling and Resolution Policy.

5. GUIDELINES

5.1. Related Legislation/Policies/Procedures

- 5.2. Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2018
- 5.3. National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018
- 5.4. Western Sydney University Disability Policy
- 5.5. English Language Programs Student Complaint Handling and Resolution Policy

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STATUS AND DETAILS

Status:	Draft		
Version:	4		
Effective Date:	12 Aug 2020		
Review Date:	12 Aug 2023		
Approval Policy:	The College Senior Management Team		
Governing Authority:	Western Sydney University Enterprises Board		
Endorsed by:	The English Language Committee		
Unit Responsible:	English Language Centre		
Enquiries Contact:	Joan Park E: J.Park3@westernsydney.edu.au		
Available On:	SharePoint	<input type="checkbox"/>	Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Summary of Changes from Previous Version

Changes to the policy to include online special consideration form for English Language Programs.