



The University of Sydney

Special Arrangements for Examination and Assessment

Approved by: Academic Board on 15 June 2005

Date of effect: 16 June 2005

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In August, 2003 the Academic Board approved amendments to Part 5 of the Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*. These amendments restricted the use of special consideration to cases of serious illness or misadventure only. It was intended that Deans would use their own powers of discretion to deal with cases which did not meet the criteria set out in the amended resolutions.
- 1.2 Following a review of the implementation of the new Special Consideration procedures it was determined that there was a need for codified arrangements for dealing with students who did not meet the Special Consideration criteria.
- 1.3 This policy outlines other forms of special arrangements for examination and assessment which may be available to students in addition to Special Consideration as described in Part 5 of the Academic Board Resolutions: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*.

2. Coverage

- 2.1 Special arrangements may be made available to any student enrolled at the University of Sydney who is unable to meet assessment requirements or attend examinations because of one or more of the following situations:
 - 2.1.1 essential religious commitments or essential beliefs (including cultural and ceremonial commitments);
 - 2.1.2 compulsory legal absence (e.g. jury duty, court summons, etc);
 - 2.1.3 sporting or cultural commitments, including political/union commitments, where the student is representing the University, state or nation;
 - 2.1.4 birth or adoption of a child, and
 - 2.1.5 Australian defence force or emergency service commitments (including Army Reserve).
- 2.2 Personal commitments, such as travel or family matters (which may be deemed by some faculties or departments to include work commitments) will not be covered by this policy.
- 2.3 Deans and/or faculties may consider special arrangements for situations other than those mentioned above at their own discretion and on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.4 This policy is intended to support the University of Sydney's commitment to Flexible Learning. However it must be recognised that the University and its faculties, while making every reasonable attempt to accommodate student needs, may not be able to provide special arrangements for assessment and/or examination in all cases, e.g. it may not be possible to make flexible arrangements for clinical placements, practicums, etc.

3. Types of Special Arrangement

3.1 Special arrangements for assessment or examination may include but is not limited to the following:

- 3.1.1 alternative dates for submission of assessments;
- 3.1.2 provision of alternative assessment tasks; and
- 3.1.3 alternative examination times/arrangements.

3.2 Faculties or departments/schools are encouraged to deal with each application for special arrangements on a case-by-case basis and to provide a flexible response to applications. In cases of an extended absence, faculties should discuss the option of withdrawal without failure with students. Unit of study and course co-ordinators would be best placed to determine when a student's absence from the University would reach the point of making it improbable, if not impossible, for the student to meet the requirements of the unit and/or course even with special arrangements for assessment and examination.

4. Faculty Responsibility

4.1 All faculties are required to provide their students with faculty-specific information on the types of special arrangement which may be available to students. This information is to contain any restrictions imposed by the faculty on special arrangements (e.g. specifically stating that work commitments will or will not be considered in student applications), information on who to contact within the faculty for information on special arrangements, and any faculty-specific timetabling dates (in addition to the timeframes and dates detailed in this policy).

5. Timelines for Applications

5.1 Any student who wishes to seek special arrangements for assessment or examination is to advise the faculty which administers the unit of study affected by the request:

- 5.1.1 at the time of enrolment with regard to religious beliefs or commitments relating to moveable feasts, prayer or worship times, or with regard to other requirements of their religion which may have an impact on the types of assessment and/or examination they can undertake; and
- 5.1.2 as soon as possible after being notified of a requirement to be absent from the University in the case of other types of commitment.

5.2 Faculties will advise students of the cut-off dates for lodgement of requests for special arrangements with regard to assessment due-dates and examination times. It is expected that faculties will consider late requests for special arrangements where the student's attendance is affected by a compulsory absence or late notification of cultural or sporting representational commitments.

5.3 With regard to examinations held during University-wide examination periods, the following may be used as guide by faculties for cut-off times:

- 5.3.1 Notice of intent to apply for special arrangements with regard to an examination to be received within 2 weeks of the publication of the examination timetable.
- 5.3.2 Full application and all supporting documentation to be lodged with 1 week of submitting notice of intent to apply for special arrangements.

6. Supporting Documentation

6.1 Faculties have the right to expect students to provide sufficient and relevant supporting documentation in English with any application for special arrangements. Such documentation may include, but is not restricted to:

- 6.1.1 in the case of religious beliefs or commitments, a supporting letter from the student's mullah, pastor, rabbi or equivalent religious or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians' leader;
- 6.1.2 in the case of a compulsory absence, a copy of the summons, subpoena, court order or notice of selection for jury duty (faculties may ask to sight the original document);

- 6.1.3 in the case of sporting, cultural or political/union commitments, supporting documentation from the organising sporting, cultural or political/union body;
- 6.1.4 in the case of parental or adoption commitments, a certificate from a medical practitioner (including a midwife) stating the expected date of birth or documentation from the relevant adoption agency concerning the expected date of placement;
- 6.1.5 in the case of defence force or emergency services commitments, supporting documentation from the student's brigade or unit; and
- 6.1.6 in the case of other situations being considered by the Dean and/or faculty, such documentation as is considered necessary by the Dean and/or faculty.

6.2 Students must also provide contact details to enable the faculty to seek further advice from the person or body which issued the supporting documentation used in the application.

6.3 Any student who is found to have provided forged documents in order to obtain special arrangements for assessment or examination will be subject to the University's procedures for dealing with cases of misconduct as set out in Chapter 8 of the University of Sydney By-law 1999 (as amended).

7. Further Information

7.1 Faculties may wish to seek further information with regard to applications for special arrangements. It is recommended that such advice be sought from the following units/agencies:

Religious Commitments www.crc.nsw.gov.au/calendar/index.htm

Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Australians' Matters Koori Centre

Sporting Commitments and
Elite Athletes Sydney University Sports

8. Related Policies:

8.1 Student Code of Conduct

8.2 Assessment and Examination of Coursework

8.3 Discrimination Prevention Policy