



Special consideration for assessment policy

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1. Overview

- 1.1. This policy defines the requirements and processes for dealing with requests for special consideration in relation to centrally administered assessments undertaken by RACP trainees (in Australia and New Zealand).
- 1.2. The policy applies to all summative assessments (written and clinical) conducted by the College (Division, Faculty, Chapter) and the trainees undertaking these assessments.
- 1.3. Special consideration issues covered by the policy are: permanent and/or chronic impairment or disability which affect performance; temporary impairments, including acute illness or injury, compassionate grounds and other serious disruptive events; religious grounds; technical problems during the assessment; and financial hardship.
- 1.4. Options for special consideration include provision of extra time or aids during the assessment, re-scheduling of assessment within current assessment period, permission to withdraw without financial penalty, or opportunity for supplementary assessment (Divisional Clinical Examination only). Marks will not be adjusted.

2. Background and Purpose

- 2.1. The College has a responsibility to consumers and stakeholders to ensure that all centrally administered summative assessments are run consistently, transparently and robustly, and that all trainees meet the required standard set down by the College.



- 2.2. The College is therefore committed to providing all trainees with an equal opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in any centrally administered summative assessment (written or clinical).
- 2.3. The purpose of the policy is to define the processes that apply to any application for special consideration with respect to circumstances associated with the assessment, which may detrimentally affect performance and/or prevent a trainee attending a specific assessment.

3. The Policy

- 3.1. The standards of all centrally administered, summative assessments are set against the curricula for the relevant Division, Faculty or Chapter education program. In order to maintain and ensure patient safety, all trainees must meet the required standard for College assessments. For this reason special consideration does not include adjustment of trainees' marks by the College.
- 3.2. It is the decision of the trainee to present for an assessment and as such any trainee who attempts any assessment needs to be aware that the required standard must be met.
- 3.3. While the College sympathises with trainees whose preparation for an assessment may be impaired due to circumstances listed under item 3.4, impaired preparation cannot be considered as a reason for special consideration.
- 3.4. The reason for granting special consideration is to accommodate circumstances suffered by trainees which are beyond their control and which may impact on their capacity either to attend or to perform at an assessment. Such issues include permanent and/or chronic impairment or disability which affect performance; temporary impairments, including acute illness or injury, compassionate grounds and other serious disruptive events; religious grounds; technical problems during the assessment; and financial hardship.
- 3.5. All applications for special consideration must be made in writing to the College and must comply with this policy.
- 3.6. Although every effort is made to handle requests sensitively, in making an application for special consideration the trainee waives their rights to privacy in relation to any of the information included in the application so that the case can be given full and careful consideration by the College.
- 3.7. While College will endeavour to accommodate applications for Special Consideration, it may not be possible due to the complexity of some examinations.
- 3.8. **Permanent and/or chronic impairment or disability**



- 3.8.1. Permanent and/or chronic impairment or disability is defined as a permanent or long standing condition that may limit the participation or performance of a trainee when they are undertaking an assessment.
- 3.8.2. Special consideration under this category must be sought by the trainee at least 3 months before the assessment is to be held.
- 3.8.3. Applications must specify the type of assistance sought and have attached a detailed medical certificate showing:
 - 3.8.3.1. a description of the medical problem or disability;
 - 3.8.3.2. the period of the medical problem or disability;
 - 3.8.3.3. the medical practitioner's professional opinion about the effect of the medical problem or disability on the trainee's ability to perform in the assessment.
- 3.8.4. The medical practitioner supplying the evidence should have a professional doctor-patient relationship with the applicant and should not be a family member, relative, supervisor, employer or colleague.
- 3.8.5. The trainee may be asked to undertake an assessment by an independent assessor chosen by the College. The independent assessor will be asked to provide a report with an opinion on the need for the type of assistance requested by the trainee. The cost for the provision of such a report shall be borne by the trainee.
- 3.8.6. The decision on whether or not the opinion of an independent assessor is required ultimately rests with the Chair of the relevant education committee, after consideration by the relevant assessment committee.
- 3.8.7. Upon consideration of all available documentation in relation to the request, the relevant education or assessment committee will advise the trainee in writing, no later than four weeks before the assessment, of any provisions/special arrangements to be made in the assessment to compensate for the limitations imposed by an individual trainee's disability. The types of assistance to be provided during an assessment should be similar to what might be reasonably expected to be available within the normal workplace of a clinician. These may include additional time, special equipment, or other modification of the assessment procedure, as appropriate.

3.9. Temporary impairment – acute illness or injury



- 3.9.1. This category includes the following situations that may cause substantial disruption to a trainee's performance during an assessment or prevent attendance at the assessment.
 - 3.9.1.1. Acute medical conditions or serious injury (e.g. a significant asthma attack on the day of the assessment or a disabling bout of influenza or gastroenteritis etc. or otherwise significant symptoms such as pain, dyspnoea, sensory loss etc.).
- 3.9.2. In circumstances where the trainee presents for assessment, it is a requirement that the trainee notify an assessment supervisor/examiner of their problem before or during the course of the assessment.
- 3.9.3. Special consideration must be sought by the trainee as promptly as the circumstances permit and in all cases no later than 10 working days after the date of their assessment (and before notification of the outcome of the assessment).
- 3.9.4. The request for special consideration must describe the problem and have attached a detailed medical certificate showing:
 - 3.9.4.1. the date(s) on which the trainee sought medical treatment or advice;
 - 3.9.4.2. a description of the medical problem;
 - 3.9.4.3. the period of the medical problem;
 - 3.9.4.4. the medical practitioner's professional opinion about the effect of the medical problem on the trainee's ability to perform in the assessment.
- 3.9.5. The medical practitioner supplying the evidence should have a professional doctor-patient relationship with the applicant and should not be a family member, relative, supervisor, employer or colleague.
- 3.9.6. Outcomes of special consideration may include any of the following:
 - 3.9.6.1. Permission to withdraw from the assessment without financial penalty.
 - 3.9.6.2. Rescheduling of the trainee's assessment within the current assessment period where possible.
 - 3.9.6.3. Opportunity to re-present for a second attempt at the assessment (supplementary assessment - Divisional Clinical Examination only).

3.10. Temporary impairment – compassionate grounds and other serious disruptive events



- 3.10.1. This category includes the following situations that may cause substantial disruption to a trainee's performance during an assessment or prevent attendance at the assessment.
 - 3.10.1.1. Bereavement or serious illness of an immediate family member or significant other person.
 - 3.10.1.2. Birth or adoption of a child.
 - 3.10.1.3. Serious disruptive events (e.g. vehicular accident on the way to the assessment).
- 3.10.2. In circumstances where the trainee presents for assessment, it is a requirement that the trainee notify an assessment supervisor/examiner of their problem before or during the course of the assessment.
- 3.10.3. Special consideration must be sought by the trainee as promptly as the circumstances permit and in all cases no later than 10 working days after the date of their assessment (and before notification of the outcome of the assessment).
- 3.10.4. Appropriate supporting documentary evidence must be provided. This may include:
 - 3.10.4.1. documentary evidence of serious illness of a family member or significant other person (in which case the requirements and provisions in Section 3.11.4 relating to medical certificates and privacy will apply);
 - 3.10.4.2. other relevant documentary evidence.
- 3.10.5. Outcomes of special consideration may include any of the following:
 - 3.10.5.1. Permission to withdraw from the assessment without financial penalty.
 - 3.10.5.2. Rescheduling of the trainee's assessment within the current assessment period where possible.
 - 3.10.5.3. Opportunity to re-present for a second attempt at the assessment (supplementary assessment - Divisional Clinical Examination only).

3.11. Religious grounds

- 3.11.1. Applications for special consideration due to religious observance prohibiting participation in an assessment at a particular time should be made concurrently with applications for assessment. Trainees must provide all relevant information at the time of application.



- 3.11.2. The College will endeavour to accommodate trainees with legitimate religious requirements, taking into account what might reasonably be expected to occur in the trainee's workplace.
- 3.11.3. The College may also seek advice from an authority in the particular religion prior to making a decision.

3.12. Cultural or other circumstances:

- 3.12.1. Applications for special consideration due to cultural or other circumstances prohibiting participation in an assessment at a particular time should be made concurrently with applications for assessment. Trainees must provide all relevant information at the time of application.
- 3.12.2. Cultural or other circumstances may include necessary involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity (excluding those specified in item 3.12.4) where supported by documentation from a relevant and recognized official or community leader, such as:
 - 3.12.2.1. Military or emergency service commitments where supported by documentation.
 - 3.12.2.2. Legal requirements, such as when required for jury duty, summoned to or subpoenaed by a Court.
 - 3.12.2.3. Participation as a National or State representative in a sporting, political or union event.
- 3.12.3. The College will endeavour to accommodate trainees with legitimate requirements, taking into account what might reasonably be expected to occur in the trainee's workplace.
- 3.12.4. The following circumstances would not normally be regarded as grounds for special consideration:
 - demands of community sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity;
 - recreational travel;
 - planned events, such as weddings.

3.13. Technical problems during the assessment:

- 3.13.1. Technical problems are defined as circumstances resulting in a significant disturbance to the normal course of the assessment which could reasonably be expected to have hindered an individual trainee's performance and where satisfactory adjustments to allow for such circumstances were not made on the day. These could include, evacuation of the assessment venue or a patient involved in the assessment becoming acutely ill.



- 3.13.2. In all cases, assessment supervisors/examiners will attempt to compensate for any disadvantage caused by a technical problem during the course of the assessment. Such compensation might include extending examination time to compensate for time lost during a disruption during the written examination or allowing additional time with a patient where an interruption has occurred during a clinical examination.
- 3.13.3. When it is not possible to compensate for a technical problem during the course of the assessment and where the assessment supervisor is of the opinion that the technical problem may have unfairly disadvantaged the individual trainee, the trainee may be offered the opportunity to re-present for the assessment (supplementary assessment). At present, a supplementary examination is only available for candidates in the RACP Clinical Examination of the Divisions.
- 3.13.4. If during the course of the assessment the trainee is experiencing short-term discomfort or distraction affecting his or her performance, the trainee should alert the assessment supervisor during the assessment. If the assessment supervisor is of the view that the conditions complained of warrant action, appropriate measures to address the situation will be taken. If the assessment supervisor is of the view that the conditions are no different from those experienced by other trainees, the assessment supervisor may refuse to accommodate the trainee. In all situations the assessment supervisor will note the complaint and the outcome which will be referred to the relevant assessment committee prior to ratification of results.

3.14. Financial hardship:

- 3.14.1. Under exceptional circumstances in situations of extreme financial hardship precluding timely payment of fees, the College may allow special consideration in the form of deferred payments of fees. Trainees will not, however, be allowed to present for the assessment if the fees are not paid in full by the time of the assessment.

4. Appeal Process:

- 4.1. If the trainee wishes to appeal a decision relating to the granting of special consideration, then the application, stating the grounds for appeal, must be made by the trainee in accordance with the College Appeals Policy. The result of an assessment is not able to be appealed.

5. Legal implications:

- 5.1. No legal or compliance issues have been identified in relation to this policy.

Summary Table for Special Consideration for Assessments Policy

Reason for request	Timing of application	Documentation required	Decision made by	Possible outcomes of special consideration	Comments
Permanent and/or chronic impairment or disability [Item 3.8]	Three months before date of assessment	Medical certificate Independent assessor	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Aids during assessment: extra time, special equipment, modification of assessment procedure	Candidate to suggest assistance needed. Such assistance as would be reasonably expected to be available in the workplace
Temporary impairment – acute illness or injury [Item 3.9]	Notify assessment supervisor before or during the assessment Application for special consideration no later than 10 working days after date of assessment and before results notified	Medical certificate	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Re-scheduling of assessment within current assessment period Permission to withdraw without financial penalty Opportunity for supplementary examination*	*The logistics of a national assessment generally preclude arrangement of a special supplementary assessment
Temporary impairment – compassionate grounds and other serious disruptive events [Item 3.10]	Notify assessment supervisor before or during the assessment Application for special consideration no later than 10 working days after date of assessment and before results notified	Relevant documentary evidence	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Re-scheduling of assessment within current assessment period Permission to withdraw without financial penalty Opportunity for supplementary examination*	*The logistics of a national assessment generally preclude arrangement of a special supplementary assessment
Religious grounds [Item 3.11]	At time of application for assessment	Explanation of religious requirement. College may seek advice from religious authority	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Scheduling of exam to avoid religious observance	
Cultural or other circumstances [Item 3.12]	At time of application for assessment	Explanation of circumstances supported by documentation from a relevant and recognized official or community leader	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Scheduling of exam to avoid other commitments	



Technical problems during the assessment [Item 3.13]	Notify assessment supervisor during the assessment	Record of person with whom the issue was raised	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Compensation, where possible, during course of assessment e.g. extra time. Re-scheduling of assessment within current assessment period if possible Opportunity for supplementary examination*	*The logistics of a national assessment generally preclude arrangement of a special supplementary assessment
Financial hardship [Item 3.14]	By one month prior to the closing date of application for assessment	Support from the candidate's supervisor	Relevant assessment/ education Committee	Deferred payment of fees	Fees must be paid in full by the time of the assessment