

Special consideration for assessment policy

Policy Name	Special consideration for assessment policy
Department	Education Services
Approved By	College Education Committee
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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to enable mitigation of unreasonable barriers to assessment activities of The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) caused by exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances not ordinarily encountered or anticipated and beyond the control of a trainee may impact their ability to attend or perform optimally in a written or clinical examination, or complete or submit a work-based assessment requirement.
- 1.2. Circumstances which may require special consideration and/ or special arrangements are: permanent and longstanding impairment, temporary impairment – medical grounds, non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption, essential commitments (religious, cultural, societal or legal), or technical problems during an examination.
- 1.3. This policy sets out how and when special consideration applications must be made, how they will be considered, and the range of possible outcomes for different types of circumstances, and assessments (refer Outcome Summary Table, Appendix A).
- 1.4. The following are not covered by this policy: failure to meet the required standard in an RACP assessment, late examination applications, exhausted examination attempts, exhausted time limits to complete training, and late training applications.

2. Terminology/definitions

- 2.1. Special consideration is the process of considering the particular circumstances affecting a trainee with a view to enabling the granting, where justified, of special provisions or arrangements relating to an examination or work-based assessment, to alleviate the impact of the exceptional circumstance(s) without excusing the trainee from meeting a requirement, a standard for performance or qualification which have been objectively set by the RACP.
- 2.2. The categories of exceptional circumstances under which a trainee can make an application for special consideration are defined in Appendix B and listed below:
 - permanent and longstanding impairment;
 - temporary impairment- medical grounds;
 - non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption;
 - essential commitments (religious, cultural, societal or legal obligations);
 - technical problems during the assessment.

Circumstances which do not ordinarily constitute ground for special consideration are set out in Appendix C.

- 2.3. Examination refers to any summative written, clinical or practical assessment administered by an RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter.
- 2.4. Work-based assessment refers to any formative or summative assessment activity undertaken in the workplace as part of an RACP training program's requirements.

3. Outcomes of an application for special consideration

- 3.1. The outcome of an application will be that special consideration is granted, or that special consideration is not granted.
- 3.2. Where special consideration is granted, the trainee will not be excused from meeting a requirement, a standard for performance or qualification which have been objectively set by The RACP. Marks will not be adjusted. Exam results are not appealable.
- 3.3. Possible outcomes for successful applications for special consideration are set out in Outcome Summary Table, Appendix A.

In relation to **RACP examinations**:

3.4. **Pre-examination considerations** refer to an incident/issue that occurs prior to commencement of an examination.

3.4.1. Outcomes for pre-examination requests for special consideration will specify particular (1) provisions, (2) allocations or (3) refunds for candidates.

3.4.2. The types of assistance to be provided during an assessment will be limited to what might be reasonably expected to be available within the normal workplace of an RACP trainee. These may include special equipment, or other modification of the assessment procedure, as appropriate.

3.4.3. Due to the complexity of some examinations it may not be possible to accommodate an application for special consideration.

3.5. **Consideration of technical or procedural issues encountered during an examination**

3.5.1. If a technical or procedural issue is encountered during an examination, the candidate must make the examiner aware immediately at time of issue (see Instructions to Candidates).

3.5.2. The outcome for a technical or procedural issue encountered during an examination is compensation or resolution during the course of assessment where possible.

3.6. **Post-examination considerations** refer to an incident/issue that occurs once the examination has commenced where compensation or resolution during the course of the assessment is not possible.

3.6.1. Outcomes for post-examination requests for special consideration will specify (1) potential redesignation of exam status or (2) potential refund for candidate.

3.6.2. A supplementary exam attempt is only an option for Divisional Clinical examinations where significant technical or procedural issues have occurred and will be determined by the RACP.

In relation to **work-based assessments**:

3.7. **Work-based assessment considerations** refer to an incident/issue which could lead to the trainee being unable to satisfactorily complete or submit all requirements for a prospectively approved training period.

- 3.7.1. Outcomes for work based assessment requests for special consideration will specify a time extension or other appropriate consideration to enable completion and/or submission of the requirement.

4. Application process for special consideration

- 4.1. Applications must be made using the application form. Applications for special consideration should be made as early as possible but at the very latest by the published deadline, which will vary depending on the category of exceptional circumstances. (Appendix A and B).
- 4.2. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all required documentation to support the application as detailed in the published applicant guidelines. Evidence required will depend on the category of exceptional circumstance.
- 4.3. Applications will be de-identified and treated confidentially. Details of the circumstances relating to the application will only be reviewed by relevant College staff and Committee Members in order to enable a decision to be made in relation to the application.

5. Reconsideration, Review and Appeals

- 5.1. Rights of appeal and procedures on appeal are to be found in the College By-Law: Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Process.

6. Related policies and other documents

- 6.1. Special consideration summary outcomes table (Appendix A)
- 6.2. Exceptional circumstances categories (Appendix B)
- 6.3. Circumstances which do not constitute grounds for special consideration (Appendix C)
- 6.4. Instructions to Candidates, Exam Unit
- 6.5. Special Consideration Application Guidance
- 6.6. Special Consideration Guidance to Committees

7. Monitoring and evaluation

- 7.1. This policy will be monitored and evaluated by Education Services.

Outcome Summary Table- Appendix A

Possible outcomes of a successful application for special consideration - **Written and clinical/practical exam special consideration outcomes**

Timing of consideration

	Exceptional Circumstance	Application deadline	Documentation required	Decision made by?	Possible outcomes for successful applications: (e.g. allocations, provisions, refund) † - Note not all outcomes are available for all exams
Pre-exam	Essential commitments (including religious, cultural, social or legal commitments)	At time of exam application	As per the Application Guide	Exams Unit/ relevant Committee or delegate of	Specific allocation within designated exam period
	Temporary or permanent/longstanding impairment – occurred prior to commencement of exam	At time of exam application	As per the Application Guide	Exams Unit/ relevant Committee or delegate of	Specific allocation within designated exam period Provisions in exams, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice to examiners • Food/medication permitted • Physical aids/ equipment • Modification of assessment procedure
	Temporary impairment or compassionate grounds and other seriously disruptive events – occurred prior to commencement of exam- Candidate withdrawal before exam	Up to commencement of exam	As per the Application Guide	Exams Unit/ relevant Committee or delegate of	Permission to withdraw from the exam without financial penalty.
During exam	Technical or procedural issues ⁺	Candidate must make examiner aware immediately at time of issue	As per the Application Guide	Results committee or delegate of	Compensation or resolution during the course of assessment, where possible.
Post-exam	Technical or procedural issues ⁺ that could not be compensated or resolved during the examination ⁺ Candidate must make the examiner aware at the time of issue and record/document incident.	Application within 5 days of exam via email and prior to results release	As per the Application Guide	Results Committee or delegate of	Written exam: Attempt designated a withdrawal rather than a fail. Re-sit exam at next available opportunity. Refund provided. Clinical/Practical Exam: supplementary exam organised by the College for affected trainees or attempt designated a withdrawal, on a case by case basis.
	Temporary impairment – occurred during exam- candidate opted to complete exam	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed exam is designated an attempt. No refund.
	Temporary impairment – occurred during exam- Candidate unable to, or opted not to complete exam	Application within 5 days of exam via email and prior to results release	As per the Application Guide	Results Committee or delegate of	Committee based decision made on a case-by-case basis. Outcomes may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam is designated an attempt or withdrawal. • Refund may or may not be granted.

Outcome Summary Table – Appendix A (continued)

Possible outcomes of a successful application for special consideration - **Work-based assessments for special consideration outcomes**

Exceptional circumstance	When to apply?	Documentation required	Decisions made by?	Possible outcomes for successful applications†
All exceptional circumstances categories	As soon as the issue arises and where practicable before work-based assessment is due	As relevant to the request, per the Application Guide	Relevant training committee or delegate of	Time- extension or other appropriate special arrangement

† Please note that an outcome of a request for special consideration may be that your request has not been granted

Special Consideration for Assessment policy – Appendix B

Categories of exceptional circumstances*

- *Permanent and/or longstanding impairment*: a permanent or long standing condition that may limit the participation or performance of a trainee.
- *Temporary impairments-medical grounds*: acute medical condition or serious injury that may cause substantial disruption to a trainee’s preparation or performance during an examination, prevent attendance at the examination or impact a work-based assessment.
- *Non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption*: situations that may cause substantial disruption to a trainee’s preparation or performance during assessment or prevent attendance at, or submission of the assessment.
- *Essential commitments*: Considerations due to religious or cultural observance prohibiting participation in an assessment at a particular time, significant societal obligations or legal commitments.
- *Technical problems during examination*: circumstances resulting in a significant disturbance to the normal course of the examination which could reasonably be expected to have hindered an individual trainee’s performance and where satisfactory adjustment to allow for such circumstances could not be made on the day.

* All categories of exceptional circumstances are subject to *Appendix C*, Circumstances which do not constitute special consideration. Please see *Appendix C* for further information.

Special Consideration for Assessment policy – Appendix C

Circumstances which do not constitute ground for special consideration

The following examples would not normally be regarded by the College as exceptional circumstances for the purposes of applying for special consideration. **This list is not exhaustive.**

- Stress which would ordinarily be associated with preparation for or performance in examinations or other forms of assessment
- Stress related to the result of travel arrangements made by the individual submitting the application*
- Knowingly attempting an assessment with inadequate preparation, in the absence of factors that may be considered exceptional by their nature
- Stress such as resulting from relationship difficulties minor illness or medical condition affecting the individual
- Pre-existing illness or medical condition affecting the immediate family member, partner or close relative which is not regarded as acute and substantive
- Excessive work commitments, including specific rostering arrangements leading up to examinations*
- Work-related stress such as may be met in the course of normal medical practice
- The inability of the individual to organize their time effectively in order to meet administrative requirements/deadlines
- Ignorance of relevant published regulations and/or policies
- Forgetting a deadline or submission date for a work-based assessment
- Computer-related or other similar personal technology failure leading up to examination or assessment due date
- Loss or theft of books or notes or similar materials*
- Decisions to undertake optional commitments of a personal nature
- Circumstances where alternative arrangements were available
- Demands of community sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity
- Recreational travel
- Planned events such as weddings
- Financial hardship

*Refers to examinations only

Trainee mental health and wellbeing is a priority of the RACP. If any trainee is experiencing difficulties help can be sought here <https://www.racp.edu.au/trainees/trainee-support-services/trainees>. Although we acknowledge there is stress related to examinations and workplace commitments, stress which is in the expected range will not be considered under the Special Consideration for Assessment policy. However, trainees who are experiencing significant difficulty and mental health issues related to training requirements are welcome to make an application under the temporary impairment, medical grounds category.