

Special Consideration for Assessment Policy

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References/Legislation	
Associated RACP Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special consideration summary outcomes table (Appendix A) • Exceptional circumstances categories (Appendix B) • Circumstances which do not constitute grounds for special consideration (Appendix C) • Special Consideration Application Guide and Form • Special Consideration Guidance to Committees • Reconsideration, Review and Appeals By-Law
Applicability	Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand

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1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of RACP training programs, trainees may experience exceptional circumstances that impact assessment activities. Such circumstances not ordinarily encountered or anticipated and beyond the control of a trainee may impact their ability to attend or perform optimally in an examination, or complete or submit a work-based assessment requirement. The RACP is committed to supporting all trainees by providing reasonable adjustments where necessary to ensure equitable access to assessment activities, in a way that is transparently fair, responsive, accountable and people-focussed.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to enable the mitigation of unreasonable barriers to assessment activities of the RACP caused by exceptional circumstances.

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 circumstances and assessments.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to special consideration and/or special arrangements for assessments and examinations in all RACP training programs. It includes reasonable adjustments where possible for candidates with permanent or temporary circumstances that may affect performance, ensuring that all trainees have equitable access to assessments and examinations aligning with anti-discrimination legislation and the RACP's commitment to supporting all trainees.

4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1. Circumstances that may require special consideration

4.1.1. The following are eligible for special consideration, as they fall within the scope of exceptional circumstances covered by this policy:

- a) permanent or long-term disability and temporary disability due to medical or other relevant conditions,
- b) Pregnancy, lactation and infant feeding needs,
- c) compassionate grounds or serious disruptions,
- d) essential commitments such as religious, cultural, societal or legal obligations,
- e) or technical issues encountered during an examination.

4.1.2. The following are not eligible for special consideration, as they do not fall within the scope of exceptional circumstances covered by this policy:

- a) failure to meet the required standard in an RACP assessment,
- b) late examination applications,
- c) exhausted examination attempts,
- d) exhausted time limits to complete training, and
- e) late training applications.

4.1.3. The RACP recognises that not every exceptional circumstance trainees may encounter can be adequately summarised and categorised in a policy document. Circumstances not outlined in 4.1.1 and not defined as ineligible in 4.1.2 may be eligible to be considered on a case-by-case basis

4.2. Outcomes of an application for special consideration

4.2.1. The outcome of an application will be that special consideration may be granted, partially granted or denied. 4.2.2. Where special consideration is partially granted, the RACP may offer alternative arrangements as deemed appropriate.

4.2.3. 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 and grades will not be adjusted, and examination results are final and not subject to appeal.

4.2.4. Possible outcomes for successful applications for special consideration are set out in the Outcome Summary Table, Appendix A. If an application for special arrangements is granted, it applies solely to the specific examination instance for which the application was submitted. Special arrangements cannot be transferred to another examination or assessment; a separate application will be required for each instance.

4.2.5. The RACP may deny a special consideration request if:

- a) the application is incomplete,
- b) the application is not submitted by the prescribed deadline (refer to timelines outlined within Appendix A),
- c) the application is not supported by reasonable evidence,
- d) the application has not been submitted in a reasonable timeframe to allow the RACP to make the appropriate arrangements,
- e) the Applicant does not respond in a reasonable timeframe to requests from the RACP for additional information,
- f) the application cannot reasonably be accommodated by the RACP, and/or
- g) the application does not comply with this policy.

4.2.6. In relation to RACP examinations:

- a) **Pre-examination considerations** refer to an incident/issue that occurs prior to the commencement of an examination.
 - I. Outcomes for pre-examination requests for special consideration will specify particular (1) provisions, (2) allocations or (3) refunds for candidates.
 - II. 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 modifications of the assessment procedure, as appropriate.
 - III. Due to the complexity of some examinations, an application for special consideration may not be accommodated.
- b) **Consideration of technical or procedural issues encountered during an examination**

- I. If a technical or procedural issue is encountered during an examination, the candidate must make the examiner aware immediately at the time of issue.
 - II. Where possible, the outcome for a technical or procedural issue encountered during an examination is the resolution and/or compensation for this during the assessment.
- c) **Post-examination considerations** refer to an incident/issue that occurs once the examination has commenced and for which resolution and/or compensation during the assessment is not possible.
- I. Outcomes for post-examination requests for special consideration will specify (1) potential redesignation of examination status or (2) potential refund for the candidate.
 - II. A supplementary examination attempt is only an option for Divisional Clinical Examinations where significant technical or procedural issues have occurred and will be determined by the relevant Committee.
 - III. Special consideration will not result in additional marks or score changes without completing an alternative assessment. Examinations will not be re-scored or re-assessed, and candidates cannot be granted a pass based solely on special consideration.

4.2.7. In relation to **work-based assessment**:

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

4.3. Application process for special consideration

- 4.3.1. Applications must be made using the application form. Applications for special consideration should be made as early as possible but by the published deadline under the relevant assessment at the very latest, which will vary depending on the category of exceptional circumstances. (Appendix A and B).
- 4.3.2. The applicant is responsible for providing all required documentation to support the application, as detailed in the published applicant guidelines. The evidence required will depend on the category of exceptional circumstance.
- 4.3.3. 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 to enable a decision to be made in relation to the application.
- 4.3.4. Applications submitted outside the required timeframe or applications initially submitted within the timeframe but not on the prescribed form may, in some circumstances, still be considered. Acceptance will be at the discretion of the relevant College entity or approved delegate, who must be satisfied that the application could not reasonably have been submitted on time or the prescribed form and that the circumstances justify an exception.

4.3.5. The RACP will provide the Applicant with written notification of the outcome of their Special Consideration application within the following timeframes unless otherwise advised by the RACP:

- I. No later than two business days before the scheduled assessment date.
- II. Within 20 business days from the receipt of a complete application.

5. RECONSIDERATION, REVIEW AND APPEALS

If an application for Special Consideration is unsuccessful, trainees can seek a review through the College's Reconsideration, Review and Appeals process. A Reconsideration, Review, or Appeal can only be initiated after a Special Consideration for Assessment has been submitted.

The Reconsideration, Review and Appeals By-Law applies exclusively to decisions made by College Bodies and explicitly excludes examination results, as these represent outcomes of assessments against established criteria rather than discretionary decisions. Refer to the Reconsideration, Review, and Appeals By-Law for more information.

6. REVIEW OF POLICY

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as required by legislative changes or requirements. It may also be changed as a result of other amendments.

Staff and members of the College may provide feedback about this document by emailing RACPPolicy@racp.edu.au.

7. DEFINITIONS

Term	Means
Board	the Board of Directors of the College.
Categories of exceptional circumstances	<p>under which a trainee can make an application for special consideration are defined in Appendix B and listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permanent or long-term disability and temporary disability due to medical conditions or health-related needs, • pregnancy, lactation and infant feeding needs, • compassionate grounds or serious disruptions, • essential commitments such as religious, cultural, societal or legal obligations, or • technical issues encountered during an examination. <p>Circumstances that do not ordinarily constitute ground for special consideration are set out in Appendix C.</p>
College	The Royal Australasian College of Physicians, ACN 000 039 047, an incorporated body limited by guarantee.
Examination	refers to any summative written, clinical or practical assessment administered by an RACP Division, Faculty or Chapter.
Fellow, Trainee, and Member	have the same meaning as in the College Constitution
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.
Work-based assessment	refers to any formative or summative assessment activity undertaken in the workplace as part of an RACP training program's requirements.
Reasonable adjustments	are modifications or provisions made to remove or reduce barriers for candidates with disabilities, ensuring they can participate in assessments on an equitable basis with others without compromising the integrity of the assessment.

8. HISTORY

Revision	Effective Date	Summary of Changes
1.0	01.01.2010	New Policy
2.0	01.01.2018	Limited revision (for work-based assessment)
2.0	03.03.2018	Limited revision (for examinations)
2.1	02.12.2022	Administrative update and transfer to new policy template
3.0	01.03.2025	Limited revision (for examinations)

Appendix A - Outcome Summary Table

Possible outcomes of a successful application for special consideration – Examinations

	Exceptional Circumstance	Application deadline	Documentation required	Decision made by	Possible outcomes for successful applications Note: Not all outcomes are applicable to every examination	
Timing of consideration	Pre-exam	Permanent or long-term disability and temporary disability due to medical or other relevant conditions	At the time of examination application	As per the Application Guide	Assessment Services, relevant Committee or delegate of	<p>Specific allocation within the designated examination period</p> <p>Provisions in examinations, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice to examiners • Food or medication permitted • Physical aids or equipment • Modification of assessment procedure • Additional time excluding the Divisional Clinical Examinations (DCE). Due to the nature of the DCE, additional time during or between cases cannot be provided.
		Pregnancy, lactation and infant feeding needs	At the time of examination application if possible. We recognise that pregnancy, lactation and infant feeding needs often are not known well in advance. We ask that you submit your application as soon as possible so that the RACP has maximum flexibility	As per the Application Guide	Assessment Services, relevant Committee or delegate of	<p>Specific allocation within designated examination period</p> <p>Provisions in examinations, if lactating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If available, access to private spaces for breastfeeding or expressing milk. • Refrigerated storage for expressed milk during assessments. • Additional breaks excluding the DCE • Examiners informed of provisions <p>Provisions in examinations, if pregnant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food/medication permitted • Additional breaks excluding the DCE • Modification of examination technique

		to make appropriate arrangements.			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examiners informed of provisions
	Essential commitments, including religious, cultural, social or legal commitments	At the time of examination application	As per the Application Guide	Assessment Services, relevant Committee or delegate of	Specific allocation within the designated examination period
	Compassionate grounds or other significant disruptive events occurring before the start of the examination	Up to commencement of examination	As per the Application Guide	Assessment Services, relevant Committee or delegate of	Permission to withdraw from the examination without financial penalty.
During exam	Technical or procedural issues	Candidate must make examiner or invigilator aware immediately at the time of issue	As per the Application Guide	Results Committee or delegate of	Compensation or resolution during assessment, where possible.
Post-exam	Technical or procedural issues that could not be compensated or resolved during the examination The candidate must make the examiner aware of the issue at the time of issue and record/document the incident.	Application within five (5) days of the examination via email and before the results are released	As per the Application Guide	Results Committee or delegate of	<p>Written examination: The attempt will be designated as a withdrawal rather than a fail. The candidate may re-sit the examination at the next available opportunity, and a refund will be issued.</p> <p>Clinical or Practical Examination: The College may organise a supplementary examination for affected trainees, or the attempt may be designated as a withdrawal, determined on a case-by-case basis.</p>
	Temporary disability occurred during the examination, and the candidate opted to complete examination	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	The completed examination is counted as an attempt, with no refund provided.
	Temporary disability occurred during the examination, and the candidate	Application within five (5) days of	As per the	Results Committee or delegate of	Decisions are made by the Committee on a case-by-case basis, with possible outcomes

	was unable to or opted not to complete examination	the examination via email and before the results are released	Application Guide		including the designation of the examination as an attempt, no attempt, or withdrawal and the granting of a refund where applicable.
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An **attempt** designation counts against the number of attempts a candidate has at the examinations. Grade awarded to candidate stands.

A **no-attempt** designation does not count against the number of attempts that a candidate has at the examination. Grade awarded to candidate stands.

A **withdrawal** designation does not count against the number of attempts that a candidate has at the examination. No grade is awarded.

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

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 program Committee or delegate of	Time- extension or other appropriate special arrangement

Appendix B - Categories of exceptional circumstances

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

- Permanent or long-term disability due to medical conditions: a permanent or long-standing condition that may limit the participation or performance of a trainee.
- Pregnancy, lactation and infant feeding needs
- Temporary disability due to medical conditions: 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.
- Compassionate grounds or severe disruptions: 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 issues 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.

Appendix C - Circumstances which do not constitute grounds for special consideration

The College would not normally regard the following examples as exceptional circumstances to apply for special consideration. This list is not exhaustive.

- Routine stress associated with preparing for or performing in examinations, including stress from expected workloads or rostering arrangements leading up to examinations.
- Difficulty managing time effectively, resulting in missed administrative requirements or deadlines.
- Lack of awareness of relevant published regulations, policies, or deadlines.
- Decisions to engage in personal or social activities, such as community sports, social clubs, recreational travel, or planned personal events (e.g., weddings).
- Minor illnesses, medical conditions, or ongoing but non-acute conditions affecting the candidate or immediate family members, partners, or close relatives.
- Stress related to travel arrangements made by the individual.
- Financial hardship alone does not constitute an exceptional circumstance for special consideration. Support in this scenario can be explored through discussion with the RACP office.
- Forgetting a deadline or submission date for any assessment-related requirements.
- Loss or theft of books, notes, or other materials that could affect study preparation.
- Attempting an examination without adequate preparation, except in cases of exceptional factors.
- Misreading examination instructions or case details, leading to missed information.
- Minor disruptions during the examination, such as sneezing, coughing, or standard hospital announcements (e.g., MET calls).
- Incidental noise from staff members knocking or entering the examination room.
- Technical issues or glitches that occur before the examination starts, provided these do not affect the actual examination process.