

Special Consideration Policy and Procedure

Document

Document Name	Special Consideration Policy and Procedure
Brief Description	This policy outlines the circumstances and the process for students applying for special consideration at Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT).
Responsible Officer	Academic Director
Delegated Authority	Academic Board
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Version Control

Date/Approval	Version No.	Summary of Changes	Reviewer Name and Department/Office
14/8/25	10	Responsible Officer identified. Reviewed by SMT and Delegated Authority transferred to Academic Board. Review clause added. Minor changes to improve readability. Title changed to include Procedure. Procedure elements clarified and updated.	Academic Board

Related Documents

Name	Location
Assessment Policy	SIBT Website
Attendance Policy	SIBT Website
Program Progress Policy and Procedure	SIBT Website
Refund Policy and Procedure	SIBT Website
Student Complaints and Appeals Policy	SIBT Website
Special Consideration Application Form	SIBT Website
Higher Education Support Act 2003	https://www.legislation.gov.au/
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021	https://www.legislation.gov.au/

Name	Location
Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000	https://www.legislation.gov.au/
National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018	https://www.legislation.gov.au/

Contents

1. Purpose.....	4
2. Definitions	4
3. Application	4
4. Policy Statement	5
5. Special Consideration Application	5
6. Grounds for Special Consideration	5
7. Possible Outcomes of the Application	6
8. Notification to Students	7
9. Appeal	7
10. Review	8
Appendix A: Extenuating (Compassionate and Compelling) Circumstances	9
Appendix B: Acceptable Supporting Documentation	10

1. Purpose

- a) This Policy sets out:
- Extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances which may affect or have affected a student's academic performance;
 - Process for assessing these circumstances; and
 - Support avenues available to these students.

2. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Academic Census Date	The final date students can withdraw from units without academic penalty is the last campus day in week eight (8).
Academic Reasonable Adjustment	The modification of an assessment procedure or resources to ensure that the needs of students with specific requirements or disabilities are met.
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence and making judgments on whether learning outcomes have been achieved.
Assessment Task	An activity students undertake to demonstrate (or display) the nature and depth of their learning and to confirm whether or not they have achieved the learning outcomes as set out in the Unit Guide. Assessment tasks include but are not limited to essay, report, journal, problem scenario, group work, demonstration, video, presentation, written / oral examination, test, quiz, discussion posts, peer feedback, online polls.
Certified Translation	A translation of documents conducted by a translator who has received accreditation from a professional association such as National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI) or American Translators Association (ATA) or other.
Close Family Member	Is a spouse, de facto spouse, parent, grandparent, parent-in-law, sibling, or a child of the student.
Deferred Assessment Task	A concession allowing students who are unable to complete an assessment task at the scheduled time to take the assessment task at a later date.
Examination	A time-limited assessment task conducted under invigilation e.g., tests, practical assessments, quizzes, and final examinations.
Financial Census Date	The final date students can apply for or withdraw from units without incurring a debt is the last teaching day in week four (4). The Census date is a minimum of 20% of the way through a unit.
Supplementary Assessment	Another opportunity for a student to complete the assessment task for a unit. Students may be eligible to attempt a supplementary assessment where certain conditions have been met.

3. Application

This Policy applies to all students enrolled at SIBT and staff involved in assessing applications for special consideration.

4. Policy Statement

- a) SIBT is firmly committed to treating all students equitably and fairly in all aspects of its learning and teaching.
- b) SIBT recognises that a student's academic performance when completing assessment tasks may be affected by extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances, and as such, students may not reach their usual performance level.
- c) This Policy allows for reasonable adjustment to the assessment requirements and ensures staff can apply adjustments consistently, impartially, and transparently.

5. Special Consideration Application

- a) Students applying for special consideration for an assessment task or final examination must complete the [Special Consideration Application form](#) available on the SIBT Student Lounge site and SIBT website. The requirements for submitting the application include:
 - i. The [Special Consideration Application Form](#), and all supporting documents, must be lodged before or no later than two (2) working days after the due date of the assessment task or the date of the final examination.
 - ii. Students' applications are based on extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances as set out in [Appendix A](#)
 - iii. All Special Consideration Applications must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation. Refer to the [Appendix B](#).
 - iv. Documents written in a language other than English must be accompanied by a certified English translation prepared by an accredited translator.
- b) Special Consideration applications are considered by the Program Convenor normally within five (5) working days. The Program Convenor may seek the Academic Director's advice where necessary.
- c) Students may apply for special consideration after the prescribed timeframe if the impact of the circumstances prevented them from lodging the application in time and this is evidenced in the application.
- d) Students who are unable to meet the extended deadline for the assessment task, or to attend the deferred or supplementary examination, or to re-sit the examination, may apply to the Program Convenor in writing, with sufficient documentary evidence of extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances to support their re-application, for permission to have an alternate date allocated for the assessment task. Such circumstances must be different to the circumstances previously used or clearly demonstrate that the student's situation has worsened since the last application.
- e) If the Special Consideration Applications were submitted late, and extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances have been accepted by SIBT, assessments within the impacted period will be reassessed.

6. Grounds for Special Consideration

- a) Students can apply for Special Consideration when:

- i. A student's performance at any time during the study period was affected by extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances which prevented the student from preparing for all, or part of, an assessment task or final examination; or
 - ii. During the performance of an assessment task or final examination, a student was affected by extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances.
- b) The following factors are not considered as reasonable grounds for extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances:
 - i. Non serious medical condition (for example short-term illness, which can easily be treated);
 - ii. Transport delays;
 - iii. Routine demands of employment;
 - iv. Difficulties in adjusting to college life, to the self-discipline needed to study effectively, and to the demands of academic work;
 - v. Routine financial support needs;
 - vi. Lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work;
 - vii. Misreading the final examination timetable;
 - viii. Recreational travel (domestic or international) that was planned in advance.

Please refer to [Appendix A](#) for further information.
- c) SIBT will use its professional judgment to assess each case on its individual merits.
- d) When determining whether extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances are valid and accepted, SIBT will consider documentary evidence provided to support the claim.
- e) Students who experience technical difficulties (such as internet connectivity or browser issues) when submitting online activities and assessments should contact their Unit Coordinator directly rather than submitting an application for Special Consideration.

7. Possible Outcomes of the Application

- a) The Application may be rejected where there is reason to believe that a student is seeking to achieve an unfair advantage, having regard to the particular circumstances of the student's application, the student's history of applications (and the reasons for such applications), and any other relevant circumstances:
 - i. On the grounds of inadequate documentation provided;
 - ii. When the circumstances are not significant enough to warrant special consideration;
 - iii. Due to the confirmed academic misconduct for the assessment task;
 - iv. The application was submitted outside the prescribed timeframe and there were no circumstances that prevented the student from lodging the application on time.
- b) The Application may be considered, and no additional assessable work required.
- c) The Application may be approved, and reasonable assessment adjustment implemented as deemed appropriate including but not limited to:
 - i. A longer extension (more than 7 calendar days) for assessment submission or examination. The period of extension will start from the date of notification sent to the student;

- ii. Provision of an alternative assessment task that will resemble as closely as possible the original assessment item and carry the same percentage of total weighting for the unit;
- iii. Resubmission of the assessment task or re-sit of the examination;
- iv. Supplementary assessment;
- v. Adjustment of marks for an assessment task or recommendation to change the grade for a unit;
- vi. Reasonable adjustment to the attendance requirement;
- vii. Application to withdraw from the unit with no financial or academic penalties to be submitted for consideration. Students will be advised whether a meeting with the Student Learning Advisor is required as part of the process.

8. Notification to Students

- a) Students will receive a reply advising them of the receipt of their application.
- b) SIBT Student Admin Team will:
 - i. Verify all submitted documents and advise the student that:
 - In cases where insufficient documents have been uploaded:
 - They have five (5) working days to provide the missing documentation or information.
 - After the deadline, the application will be submitted to the Program Convenor for their consideration regardless of whether additional information has been provided.
 - In cases where the documents are verified and authentic:
 - The application will be submitted to the Program Convenor for their consideration.
 - In cases where the documents are found to be fraudulent:
 - The case of alleged misconduct will be submitted to the Academic Integrity Committee for their consideration and outcome;
 - ii. Inform the applicant of the outcome of the application within five (5) working days and provide any additional arrangements for the student, depending on the outcome. Additional arrangements may include but not be limited to, provision of guidance and access to
 - WWFP Application Form (if after the Financial Census Date)
 - WWAP Application Form (if after the Academic Census Date)
 - Refund Request Form
 - Leave of Absence applications
 - Welfare support
 - Student Counsellor referrals
 - iii. Notify the respective Academic Unit Coordinators, Teachers, of special consideration decisions and arrangements via email, when required.

9. Appeal

- a) Students who apply for special consideration and are dissatisfied with the outcome of their application may appeal the decision made under this policy within 20 working days from the receipt of the notification in accordance with the [Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#).



10. Review

- a) SIBT monitors the effectiveness and appropriateness of the terms under this Policy to identify continuous improvement opportunities and risk identification and mitigation and to inform updates to the policy.
- b) This Policy will be reviewed by the Responsible Officer and the Quality and Compliance Manager a minimum of every three (3) years, or when there are updates to the regulatory compliance requirements, legislation, regulations, and guidelines.

Appendix A: Extenuating (Compassionate and Compelling) Circumstances

- a) Extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances are unusual or abnormal events or situations that:
 - i. Are beyond a student's control and could not reasonably have been foreseen or prevented; and
 - ii. Have been severe enough to prevent them from successfully completing their unit of study.
- b) Extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Serious illness or injury, including deterioration of a pre-existing health condition;
 - ii. Family or personal circumstances which have severely impacted the student's ability to continue with study;
 - iii. Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents;
 - iv. Major political upheaval or natural disaster. In the case of international students this may include such situations occurring in their home country requiring emergency travel where this has impacted on the international student's studies;
 - v. A traumatic experience, which could include:
 - Involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
 - Witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime where this has impacted on the student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports);
 - vi. Where SIBT was unable to offer a pre-requisite unit, or the international student has failed a pre-requisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol.
- c) Students whose circumstances are outside the ones listed above should seek assistance from an SIBT Student Learning Advisor or other professional services and attach supporting documentation obtained from them. 'Other' circumstances may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Severe disruption to domestic arrangements;
 - ii. Relationship breakdown;
 - iii. Religious observance or obligations;
 - iv. Formal legal commitments;
 - v. Jury duty;
 - vi. Military or/and emergency service;
 - vii. Service with a recognised emergency management service;
 - viii. Participation in significant national or international events.
- d) Students will need to be able to prove their claim for extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances by providing appropriate supporting documentation (see [Appendix B](#)).

Appendix B: Acceptable Supporting Documentation

Circumstances	Documents
Visa Delay/Refusal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A letter advising that the applicant has not yet been able to obtain a visa issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA); Visa refusal letter issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA).
Failure to meet academic and/or English entry requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IELTS (or similar) test results; or High school results (or similar)
Medical and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online medical certificates provided as a result of technology-based patient consultations are considered an appropriate alternative to consulting with a patient in the same physical room (refer to e) i-iv below for further context). An original certificate/letter/report from a doctor or registered treating health professional on a letterhead, including signature or providers stamp, provider's number, and a statement that student was unable to attend classes; A medical certificate stating just "illness" or "medical condition" or "medical reason" may not be sufficient. Medical Certificates must provide the dates covered by the certificate.
Personal and Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statement from a doctor, counsellor, social worker, or independent member of the community (e.g., A Justice of the Peace or a Minister of Religion); A certificate from a funeral director; A death certificate; A certified call to Australian Defence Forces; A letter/report describing the nature of emergency attended by the State Emergency Service or Country/Rural Fire Service; A copy of an incident report; A court summons or similar.
Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of any academic advice received from their program convenor or a student learning advisor.

- a) Supporting documentation for extenuating (compassionate or compelling) circumstances must be from an independent source or authority, and clearly indicate:
 - i. What the special circumstances were;
 - ii. When they occurred;
 - iii. How long they lasted;
 - iv. The level of impact of the special circumstances.
- b) A personal statement from a student, their friend or family member, outlining their circumstances is not sufficient evidence to demonstrate extenuating (compassionate and compelling) circumstances.
- c) For international students a lack of funds is not accepted by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) as an extenuating (compassionate and compelling) reason to defer or take leave. It is a condition of a student visa that students have access to funds to cover their tuition fees and cost of living for their first year of study in Australia. International students should not rely on income from paid employment while in Australia to cover their fees and living expenses during this period. Students

experiencing an unexpected and unforeseeable change in circumstances should meet with student support to discuss their situation.

- d) Supporting documentation must be in English (or accompanied by certified translation), on official letterhead (if relevant), signed, and dated.
- e) In accordance with the Australian Medical Association's (AMA) guidance, online medical certificates provided as a result of technology-based patient consultations are an appropriate alternative to consulting with a patient in the same physical room, when they are used:
 - i. As an adjunct to normal medical practice;
 - ii. For regular patients of the practice;
 - iii. For patients who have been referred by another medical practitioner; and
 - iv. When it is clinically appropriate for the patient's circumstances.

SIBT will accept online medical certificates if:

- i. It is evident that a tele-health consultation was necessary and appropriate in the given circumstances, based on the criteria listed above in a) i-iv;
- ii. It was provided by an AHPRA registered provider; and
- iii. It can be confirmed that the service was provided as a Tele-Health Service e.g. through Skype, FaceTime etc.

All online medical certificates submitted as part of an application will be verified as part of the process to confirm their appropriateness and authenticity.