



The Division of Rural Hospital Medicine

1. TITLE: SPECIAL CONSIDERATION IN ASSESSMENT

- 1.1 Policy reference: DRHM
- 1.2 Category: Learning – Assessment
- 1.3 Approval date: February 2019
- 1.4 Revision due date: February 2022
- 1.5 Unit responsible: DRHM

2. Policy declaration

2.1 Purpose

The Division is committed to ensuring equal access to all our assessments for all candidates. Special Consideration in Assessment is the process by which the Division seeks to ensure just and equitable treatment of candidates where illness, disability or personal circumstances are beyond the control of the candidate in relation to assessment. The purpose of this policy is to enable assessment discretion to be applied in exceptional circumstances.

2.2 Scope

In scope

Candidates undergoing summative assessment under the direct auspices of the Division.

Out of scope

The following assessment situations are out of the scope of this policy:

- the StAMPS clinical examination, where the assessment policies of the ACRRM will be applied instead;
- academic papers offered by other educational institutions, where that institution's assessment policies will be applied instead; and
- clinical rotation / run assessments which would be undertaken by the registrar's employer.

3. General policy

3.1 Special consideration may be applied in a circumstance not ordinarily encountered or anticipated and beyond the control of a candidate. The specific circumstances may affect their ability to attend or perform optimally in an assessment, or to complete or submit a work-based assessment requirement.

3.2 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)
- technical problems during an assessment, including health and safety risks arising.

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

3.3 Other than in exceptional circumstances, an application for special consideration will not be considered if:

- the application is not on the prescribed form
- the application is incomplete
- the application is submitted more than 4 business days after a relevant assessment
- the candidate has attained a pass or a conceded pass for a relevant assessment.

3.4 The Division is not able to determine in advance all circumstances that might lead to the granting of consideration of Special Circumstance. Each case will be considered on its merits in accordance with this policy.

3.5 **Application**

3.5.1 An application form for Special Consideration in Assessment must be submitted. Applications should be made as early as possible; timescales for application are set out in Appendix A.

3.5.2 An application cannot usually be made on behalf of another candidate, except under extraordinary circumstances (e.g. applicant illness).

3.5.3 It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all required documentation to support their application.

3.6 **Medical Grounds**

3.6.1 Applications for special consideration on medical grounds must be accompanied by a medical certificate from the treating practitioner that details the following:

- The date on which the medical practitioner examined the individual which should be prior to or on the date of the scheduled assessment; and
- The severity of the medical condition; and
- The medical practitioner's opinion on the effect of the condition on the ability of the individual to present for the assessment.

3.7 **Compassionate Grounds**

3.7.1 Applications for special consideration on compassionate grounds must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation. This documentation may include, but is not limited to:

- A bereavement notice and statutory declaration stating relationship to deceased;
- A notice from the treating practitioner where illness of a close relative is involved;
- A copy of a police incident report;
- A letter outlining the circumstances impacting on the candidate's ability to complete the assessment task.

3.8 **Grounds of Disability**

- 3.8.1 The Division will endeavour to provide the optimal assessment environment for candidates with a disability. Individuals applying for the use of specialised equipment, aids or special assessment conditions as a result of a disability should contact the The Division advisor in writing at the time of enrolment for the assessment or at least 90 days prior to the scheduled date in order to permit appropriate arrangements, should this be considered necessary. Applications for special consideration on disability grounds must be accompanied by relevant supporting documentation. This documentation must include:
- a) A medical report or certificate confirming the nature of the disability and substantiating the grounds for the special consideration in assessment application; and
 - b) clear instructions for the provision of specified requirements.

4. **Consideration of an application for special consideration**

- 4.1 Applications will be treated confidentially. Details of the circumstances relating to the application will only be reviewed by relevant the Division staff in order to enable a decision to be made in relation to the application.
- 4.2 Applications will be reviewed by the designated the Division advisor for completion of documentary evidence and compliance with this policy.
- 4.3 In making their decision, the Division advisor may seek additional information from the candidate who is seeking special consideration.
- 4.4 On the basis of the information provided by the candidate, the following may be taken into account:
- a) the severity of the circumstances and factors involved;
 - b) the likely effect on the applicant;
 - c) the candidate's performance in other items of assessment; and,
 - d) history of previous applications for special consideration.
- 4.4 All applicants will be notified in writing within 20 working days of receipt of the application of the outcome and any adjustments that have been permitted.
- 4.5 Special Consideration in Assessment is not ongoing and is only applicable to a single assessment. A new application and supporting documentation must be made for each subsequent consideration unless otherwise stated.
- ### 4.6 **Outcomes of an application for special consideration**
- 4.6.1 The outcome of an application will be that special consideration is granted, or that special consideration is not granted.
- 4.6.2 Possible outcomes of an application for Special Consideration in Assessment are set out in Appendix A.
- 4.6.3 Where special consideration is granted, the candidate will not be excused from meeting a requirement, a standard for performance or qualification which has been set by The Division.

4.6.4 Marks will not be adjusted except in exceptional circumstances e.g. force majeure events, circumstances beyond the candidate's control (and where evidence of the circumstances can be provided). Where a candidate requests that marks be adjusted, and if it is agreed that the circumstances may allow discretion, then the candidate will need to agree that the Censor-in-Chief (or their delegate) may rely on formative assessments undertaken during their training, to supplement for the assessment that was not able to be undertaken. This will allow an overall, holistic view to be formed of the candidate's progress through the programme.

4.7 Candidate mental health and wellbeing

4.7.1 Any candidate experiencing serious personal difficulties during their training should be referred for appropriate advice and support.

4.7.2 Where patient safety may become an issue, the Medical Council of New Zealand should be advised, and on the other hand the Registrar's training needs are to be assessed and supported by the Division.

5. Right of reconsideration and review

5.1 An application for reconsideration of a Special Consideration decision may be considered by the Division.

5.2 Decisions relating to applications for special consideration in assessment may be appealed in accordance with The Division policy on Reconsideration, Review and Appeal.

6. Related policies, documents and legislation

Reconsideration, Review and Appeal Policy

7. Administrative procedures

7.1 Authorisation

This policy is approved by the Chair of the Council.

7.2 Original issue date of policy

February 2019

7.3 Review of this policy

This policy will have a three-yearly review cycle.

OUTCOME SUMMARY TABLE

Appendix A

Possible outcomes of a successful application for special consideration in assessment

	Exceptional circumstance	Application deadline	Decision-maker	Possible outcomes e.g. allocations, provisions, refund†
Pre-assessment	Essential commitments (including religious, cultural, social or legal commitments)	At time of assessment application	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Specific allocation within designated assessment period
	Temporary or permanent/longstanding impairment – occurred prior to commencement of exam	At time of assessment application	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Specific allocation within designated assessment period.
	Temporary impairment or compassionate grounds and other seriously disruptive events – occurred prior to commencement of assessment - candidate withdrawal before exam	Up to commencement of exam	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Permission to withdraw from the assessment without financial penalty
During assessment	Technical or procedural issues	Candidate must make assessor aware immediately at time of issue	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Accommodation or resolution during the assessment, where possible

Post-assessment	Technical or procedural issues* that could not be compensated for or resolved during the assessment * Candidate must make the assessor aware at the time of issue and record/document incident	Application within 5 days of assessment via email and prior to results release	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Attempt designated a withdrawal rather than a fail. Re-sit assessment at next available opportunity. Possible refund of fee.
	Temporary impairment – occurred during assessment – candidate opted to complete assessment	N/A	N/A	Completed assessment is designated an attempt. No refund.
	Temporary impairment – occurred during assessment – candidate unable to, or opted not to complete assessment	Application within 5 days of assessment via email and prior to results release	BoS delegate and chief examiner	Committee based decision made on a case-by-case basis. Outcomes may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assessment is designated an attempt or withdrawal • refund of fee may or may not be granted.

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

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

Exceptional circumstance	Application deadline	Decision-maker	Possible outcomes[†]
All exceptional circumstances categories	Prior to due date	(BoS to advise)	Time extension or other appropriate special arrangement

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

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Categories of exceptional circumstances*

- Permanent and/or longstanding impairment: a permanent or long-standing condition that may limit the participation or performance of a Candidate.
- Temporary impairments – medical grounds: acute medical condition or serious injury that may cause substantial disruption to a Candidate’s preparation for or performance during an assessment, prevent attendance at the assessment or impact a work-based assessment.
- Non-medical compassionate grounds or serious disruption: situations that may cause substantial disruption to a Candidate’s preparation for 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 assessment: circumstances resulting in a significant disturbance to the normal course of the assessment which could reasonably be expected to have hindered an individual Candidate’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.**

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Circumstances which are not grounds for special consideration

The following examples would not normally be regarded by The Division 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 assessments 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, known impairment or medical condition affecting the immediate family member, partner or close relative which is not regarded as acute and substantive
- Low level impairment (e.g. a minor illness)
- Excessive work commitments, including specific rostering arrangements leading up to assessments
- 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
- Mistaking the time or date of an assessment
- Computer-related or other similar personal technology failure leading up to assessment 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.