

SCHOOL OF MOLECULAR AND MICROBIAL BIOSCIENCES POLICY ON SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

We recognise that sickness or misadventure may have an adverse effect on student performance and have set up procedures to ensure that no student is disadvantaged because of this.

The document which follows is the official School policy statement regarding requests for Special Consideration. If you would like assistance in interpreting this document, please see your Unit of Study coordinator.

The Special Consideration Policy of the Faculty of Science can be viewed from the Faculty webpage http://www.science.usyd.edu.au/cstudent/ug/forms/special_cons.shtml

It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the guidelines and to ensure that the defined procedures are followed.

What should you do if you are sick or have other problems during the semester?

What should you do if you are sick or have other problems during the examination period?

Please refer to the School policy document which follows.

Student Special Consideration Process

Obtain and complete a Special Consideration form from the Faculty of Science office or website

http://www.science.usyd.edu.au/cstudent/ug/forms/special_cons.shtml

This includes a Professional Practitioner's Certificate to be completed by the student's registered medical practitioner or counsellor. In cases of misadventure, it may be necessary to include other documentation, such as a police report, instead of, or in addition to, the Professional Practitioner's Certificate.

It is strongly recommended that students keep a hard copy of the policy, application forms and Professional Practitioner's Certificate at home throughout their studies so that they can be easily accessed, if needed.



Lodge completed Special Consideration forms with supporting documentation at the Faculty of Science office. Bring one set of original documents for the Faculty's records and a full set of copies for each of the relevant Schools or Disciplines for which consideration is being sought. All copies will be stamped 'Received Faculty of Science dd/mm/yyyy' and a receipt issued to the student. **Please note that applications must be received within seven (7) days of the assessment task for which you are seeking consideration (i.e. 7 days from the assignment due date or date of examination).**



On the same day, bring a set of stamped copies to the School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences (one set for each assessment item for which Special Consideration is sought). The copy should be marked "To the attention of . . . (the UoS Coordinator's name)", and should be handed directly to the Academic Support Office, located on Level 4 of the School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences building (G08). **Note that no one else can accept this documentation.**



After academic judgment is complete, the student will be advised of the outcome by the Faculty office via an e-mail to their University e-mail account within ten working days of lodgement of their application.

Please note that acceptance of an application for Special Consideration at the Faculty Office is an indication only that the paperwork is correctly completed and submitted in the correct time frame. The academic judgement made by the School will be based on the merits of the information contained within the application.

SCHOOL OF MOLECULAR AND MICROBIAL BIOSCIENCES

STUDENT ILLNESS AND MISADVENTURE POLICY

The University of Sydney has policies to deal with Special Consideration due to Illness and Misadventure. The following paragraph is an extract from this policy. The full policy document is entitled *Academic Board Resolutions: Assessment and Examination of Coursework*.

"Assessments are designed to provide feedback on performance or to establish that students have achieved an adequate standard to proceed or to graduate. The University's assessment practices are designed to ensure that conditions are fair to all students, as consistent as possible and that individual students are not disadvantaged by adverse personal circumstances beyond their control or by the activities of other students."

The School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences comprises the disciplines of Biochemistry, Microbiology and Human Nutrition. To ensure that all students in all Units of Study (UoS) within the School are treated fairly and consistently, the following guidelines have been developed. These guidelines are in line with the University's recommendations. Please read these carefully, as they will apply to you while you are enrolled in UoS taught within the School.

These policies are designed to help cases of genuine need. Falsification of certificates or false representation of need is a serious breach of University guidelines and can lead to disciplinary action and/or expulsion from the University.

Any queries regarding this policy can be directed to the UoS Coordinator for the particular UoS as listed in the Faculty of Science Handbook.

1. COURSE WORK ASSESSMENT – ASSIGNMENTS AND CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Where do I submit an assignment?

The arrangements for submission of assignments may vary according to the particular UoS and the nature of the task. Details of arrangements for submission of assignments are shown in the appropriate UoS Course Manual/Course Handout.

What do I do if I am ill during the semester and cannot submit assignments by the due date?

All effort will be made by the School to ensure that illness or misadventure does not affect your academic performance. However, only serious illness or misadventure will warrant consideration and this must be well attested.

- If you are ill during the semester and cannot submit an assignment by the due date, submit an Application for Special Consideration (ASC) as per the "Student Special Consideration Process" on page 1 of this document.
- If you are experiencing chronic illness or misadventure that is affecting your study continuously throughout the semester, you should do the following
- See your UoS Coordinator as soon as you think that your study is being affected, with documentation of your circumstances (within limits of confidentiality).
- All efforts will be made to help you cope with the assessment deadlines and exam preparation, however there are certain mandatory limits to the amount of class time that can be missed without academic penalty or failure of the UoS, so you may need to consider whether it would be better to discontinue the UoS until you can resume your studies effectively.

YOUR REQUEST FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE HANDED IN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PREFERABLY BEFORE THE RELEVANT DATE. THE LENGTH OF AN EXTENSION OF DUE DATE WILL NOT EXCEED THE LENGTH OF TIME FOR WHICH YOU WERE AFFECTED BY YOUR ILLNESS OR MISADVENTURE. PLEASE NOTE THAT AN ASC WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED IF SUBMITTED MORE THAN SEVEN (7) DAYS AFTER THE DUE DATE OF THE ASSIGNMENT.

Should I hand in an Application for Special Consideration form every time I am sick?

- If you are sick for less than a week and there are no assignments due during your absence then you do not need to submit an ASC.
- However, any absence from practical classes must be explained to the UoS Coordinator and supported by relevant documentation as appropriate.

What do I do if reasons other than illness prevent me from submitting assignments by the due date?

If other circumstances prevent you from attending classes and submitting assignments, follow the 'Student Special Consideration Process' described on page 1 of this document. Instead of a Professional Practitioner's Certificate filled in by a registered medical practitioner, you will need to provide other evidence to support your circumstances. Other acceptable evidence may include a Professional Practitioner's Certificate filled in by a counsellor or a letter from a police officer, justice of the peace or other relevant parties. The information must indicate the seriousness of the misadventure and length of time that your studies may be affected.

What does the Faculty do with the Application for Special Consideration?

- Your ASC is treated confidentially and does not in any way disadvantage you.
- **It is your responsibility** to ensure that you have supplied all relevant details. A decision to extend the due date of an assignment is made only if:
 - the illness or misadventure is considered serious enough (moderately affected or higher) by your registered medical practitioner or counsellor to have affected submission of your assessment
 - and/or the date of the illness or misadventure is considered close enough in time to have affected submission of your assessment
- **It is your responsibility** to ensure that you keep your contact details up to date with the UoS Coordinator in case it is necessary to speak with you regarding your ASC.
- The Faculty makes an academic judgment about whether to grant Special Consideration and informs you by e-mail to your University e-mail address, within 7 days of lodging your ASC. In some cases, the UoS Coordinator may need to contact you more quickly, to organise additional testing

THE ACADEMIC JUDGEMENT MADE AND ANY GRANTING OF EXTENSION AND RESCHEDULING OF ASSESSMENTS IS DEPENDENT UPON THE EVIDENCE SUBMITTED IN YOUR APPLICATION.

What happens if the Academic Judgement made is that the application was declined?

If your application is declined, then lateness penalties for assignments (see below) will be applied and the assessment will not be rescheduled.

What happens if the Academic Judgement is favourable?

- A new due date will be arranged for the assignment. **It is your responsibility** to contact the UoS Coordinator to confirm the new date.
- If the assignment is not received by the new date, then lateness penalties will apply unless further documentation relating to the more recent circumstance is supplied.
- Students experiencing prolonged problems with regard to the completion of assessment tasks will be referred to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies within the Faculty of Science.
- If your ASC is in relation to compulsory classes which cannot be taken at a different time, appropriate arrangements will be made so that you will not be disadvantaged.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FOLLOW THE STEPS ABOVE SO THAT YOU HAVE THE BEST CHANCE TO COMPLETE AND BE CREDITED FOR THE SEMESTER'S WORK.

What penalties apply for late submission of an assignment?

The penalty for late submission of an assignment may vary according to the particular UoS and the nature of the task. Details of penalties for each assignment are shown in the appropriate UoS Course Manual/Course Handout or notified at the time of setting the assignment.

2. EXAMINATIONS and TESTS

What do I do if I am sick or have misadventure on the day of an examination or test?

You should make every reasonable effort to attend the examination at the scheduled time. There are, however, three options for you to follow depending on the severity of the illness/misadventure.

❖ ***Option One***

If you are genuinely unfit to sit the examination or test, or are unable to sit at the scheduled time due to illness or misadventure, you should do the following:

- See your registered medical professional or counsellor **immediately** (i.e. before the examination completion time has passed) so that your condition can be assessed and so that your Professional Practitioner's Certificate can be filled in appropriately. **Any Professional Practitioner's Certificate to be considered in the cases of an examination or test should be issued on the scheduled date of the examination or test.**
- Contact your UoS Coordinator **as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours of the exam.**
- If your Professional Practitioner's Certificate specifically states that on the day of the examination you were either unfit or unable to sit the exam, we will consider offering you a deferred examination. For some kinds of misadventure, other documentation, such as a police report, would be used instead of a Professional Practitioner's Certificate.

❖ ***Option Two***

If, on the day of the examination or test, you feel that you are likely to need some medical help during the examination, you should do the following:

- Go to the University Health Service on the day of the exam, as soon as you can before the exam starts.
- A doctor will assess you and provide a room for you to sit the exam.
- Alternately, see your own doctor before and bring a Professional Practitioner's Certificate indicating the severity of your problem to the University Health Service prior to the exam start time. The staff at the University Health Service will arrange for the exam to be delivered to you at the University Health Service.

❖ ***Option Three***

If, during the examination or test, you feel that you have become unfit to continue and that you may need some medical help you should do the following:

- Request that you be taken to the University Health Service immediately.
- A doctor will assess you and either provide a room for you to continue for you to sit the exam or recommend that your examination be terminated. The staff at the University Health Service will arrange for the exam to be delivered to you for completion at the University Health Service if required.
- If the doctor recommends that you not complete the examination or test then a Professional Practitioner's Certificate indicating the severity of your problem must be requested.

For all three options, you must then submit an Application for Special Consideration as per the 'Student Special Consideration Process' on page 1 of this document.

What happens if I complete the exam or test in accordance with Option Two or Option Three above but feel my performance has been affected?

- Make a request before you leave the examination that the University Health Service provide a Professional Practitioner's Certificate with details of your condition at the time of completion. Also if required, seek further assistance on the same day from the International Student Support Unit, University Counsellor, or your own registered medical practitioner or counsellor, and ask for another Professional Practitioner's Certificate to be completed in order for you to submit an application for Special Consideration. Unless a Professional Practitioner's Certificate issued on the day of the examination specifically states that your performance in the examination has been adversely affected no further testing will be offered.
- The ASC may be accepted for processing at the Faculty office, but the Academic Judgement may recommend no further action depending on the severity of the illness/misadventure.
- If the severity of the illness/misadventure warrants it, the Academic Judgement may recommend further testing be offered, in which case the mark from the first attempt at the examination will be discarded and the results of the further testing will be used for assessment.
- Even though the ASC may be accepted for processing by the Faculty Office, it may be necessary to defer the academic decision until the exam results have been processed. In this case, the Academic Judgement returned will state "Decision deferred until Semester results available". You will be notified of the final Academic Judgement as soon as possible after results are available.
- The further testing examination will normally contain questions which are different from the original examination. The further testing examination will include questions similar in format to the original examination.
- Failure to attend a further testing examination will result in the mark from the first attempt being submitted and there is no provision for any further ASC to be considered by Faculty.

What happens if I do not sit for the exam or test and my ASC is accepted?

- If, upon submission of an application for Special Consideration, an academic judgement is made in favour of a deferred examination, then a time will be arranged for you to sit for the deferred examination. Arrangements for notifying students of the dates for further testing may vary between units. The arrangements for each course are detailed in the appropriate UoS Course Manual/Course Handout. **It is your responsibility** to ensure that you follow these arrangements.
- The deferred examination will take place in the School as soon as possible and usually within a week of the original date so that all exams can be marked and results processed before the deadline for result submission.
- The deferred examination will normally contain questions that are different from the original examination. The deferred examination will include questions similar in format to the original examination.
- Failure to attend a deferred examination will result in a "Fail" in the UoS and there is no provision for any further ASC to be considered by Faculty.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONSULT YOUR UNIVERSITY E-MAIL ACCOUNT AND TO ENSURE THAT THE UoS COORDINATOR HAS YOUR CONTACT DETAILS, SO THAT YOU CAN FIND OUT WHETHER YOUR APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL AND THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR FURTHER TESTING.

What happens if a deferred examination or further testing is not offered?

- You have seven (7) days to make an appeal against the special consideration judgment.
- If you decide to appeal you will need to provide more evidence to support your initial ASC, but do not introduce new circumstances or material which are not directly relevant to the original application.
- You should submit the appeal in writing to the Projects and Services Officer at the Faculty of Science.
- The appeal will be considered by the Dean or a nominee of the Dean within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal, and you will be notified of the result of the appeal by e-mail to your University e-mail account.