SPECIAL CONSIDERATION ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

These guidelines assist Macquarie University students and staff in determining whether circumstances or events affecting assessment could be regarded as serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive under the Special Consideration Policy (the Policy).

SHORT-TERM CIRCUMSTANCES OR EVENTS UNDER THE SPECIAL CONSIDERATION POLICY

Short-Term Circumstances or Events are considered serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive where all conditions set out in the Policy are met, including that the circumstances were beyond the student's control, caused Substantial Disruption as defined in the Policy, were short-term in duration, and had a direct or continuing impact on the student's capacity to undertake assessment during the Event Critical Study Period.

ELIGIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES

Short-term circumstances or events that are serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive may be unexpected or anticipated in nature. Unexpected circumstances or events include, but are not limited to, personal, social or domestic matters such as physical or psychological illness, accident, injury, bereavement, family breakdown, jury service, and non-routine work commitments. Anticipated circumstances or events, such as religious, legal, elite athlete, or caring commitments, may also qualify where they significantly affect the student's capacity to undertake the relevant assessment task.

Examples of eligible circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- the death of a close family member or friend;
- a physical illness, injury, or medical condition;
- acute mental health episode;
- hospitalisation or emergency medical treatment;
- being a victim of crime (e.g. assault, burglary, or criminal harassment);
- serious family or domestic crises (e.g. domestic violence, breakdown of care arrangements); and
- University-arranged Professional Experience that conflicts with an assessment date.

This list is not exhaustive. Each application will be considered on the basis of the individual circumstances and supporting evidence provided.

24 November 2026 – Academic Senate approved the Special Consideration Eligibility Guidelines (Res AS26/108).

INELIGIBLE CIRCUMSTANCES

Students may experience periods of increased pressure arising from academic demands or personal circumstances during their enrolment. Where such challenges are a normal and foreseeable aspect of student life, they will not ordinarily be accepted as grounds for Special Consideration.

The following are not considered short-term circumstances or events that are serious, unavoidable and significantly disruptive for the purposes of the Special Consideration Policy:

- misreading the unit guide and/or assessment requirements;
- misreading the examination timetable;
- failure to check official Macquarie University student email account;
- submitting an incorrect assessment file or version, or submitting via an incorrect portal, link or method;
- failure to back up assessment work and/or files to safeguard against technical issues;
- general stress or anxiety commonly associated with academic study or examinations;
- a heavy academic workload, or multiple or competing assessment deadlines;
- attending events such as concerts, talk shows, sporting events, protests or volunteering;
- pre-planned travel or holidays (including travel or holidays associated with an otherwise eligible disruption);
- routine work commitments;
- society and/or club events;
- birthdays or other personal events;
- group work difficulties;
- transport difficulties or delays, unless supported by formal evidence of a significant and unforeseen disruption;
- Professional Experience arranged independently by the student;
- other events or activities unrelated to current employment or studies; and
- long-term or chronic conditions, disability, or ongoing carer status, for which support is available through the Student Accessibility Policy (with the exception

of a short-term episode or flare-up of a long-term or chronic condition that may still be considered under this Policy as a Short-term Circumstance or Event, where it meets the relevant criteria).

The above list is indicative and not exhaustive. Each application will be assessed on its individual merits, having regard to the circumstances and supporting evidence provided.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Exceptional Circumstances as defined in the Policy refers to circumstances that are more severe, unusual, or compelling than those ordinarily required to qualify for Special Consideration. Each application will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, with careful consideration given to the nature and validity of the Exceptional Circumstances claimed. Such an application must be supported by formal Evidence. A Statement of Fact is not, of itself, sufficient Evidence to demonstrate Exceptional Circumstances.

A student must demonstrate Exceptional Circumstances, supported by formal evidence, where an application:

a. requests additional special consideration after a prior approval for the same Assessment Task;
b. is made after an on-time Assessment Task submission or attempt; or
c. is lodged more than seven (7) calendar days after the Assessment Task due date.

In all cases, applications are subject to the timing restrictions in the Policy. An application will not be accepted once unit results have been officially released and published via eStudent for the relevant Teaching Period, except where the disruption occurred on or around a due date or scheduled date that itself falls after the release of unit results, in accordance with the Policy and the requirements set out below.

The following requirements apply to each scenario.

<u>Additional application for the same Assessment Task (after prior approval)</u>

Exceptional circumstances must represent either a continuation or worsening of the original circumstances, or a new and separate disruption of substantially greater seriousness. For example, minor illnesses (such as mild colds or headaches) are not normally considered exceptional; however, a significant deterioration in a previously diagnosed condition or a new acute medical condition emergency may be.

a. <u>Application after an on-time submission or attempt of an Assessment Task</u>
An attempt or submission of an Assessment Task is treated as the student's best and final attempt; students should not submit drafts, incomplete work, or work below their best standard. Special Consideration cannot be used to seek lenient marking. Students should complete a finalised version of the Assessment Task as soon as they are able to

perform at their usual academic level. Where a student has already submitted or attempted an Assessment Task, Special Consideration will only be considered in Exceptional Circumstances as defined below.

In this context, Exceptional Circumstances are circumstances of a serious and compelling nature that either prevented the student from ceasing work and reporting illness or disruption during the assessment task or materially impaired the student's capacity to recognise or respond to those circumstances at the time, such that they were unable to make an informed judgement about whether to continue or cease the assessment task. Exceptional Circumstances in this context do not include ordinary academic pressure, general stress or anxiety, or circumstances that were reasonably foreseeable or within the student's control.

Evidence must clearly demonstrate that, at the time of the attempt or submission, the severity of the circumstances prevented the student from exercising reasonable judgement about their capacity to perform.

b. Late application submission

Exceptional Circumstances in this context are events severe enough to have rendered the student incapable of submitting an application within seven (7) calendar days of the Assessment Task due date (for example, sudden hospitalisation). The following conditions apply:

- A late application on these grounds is not guaranteed to result in an approved outcome, and a significantly delayed application may result in a recommendation to Withdraw Without Penalty.
- An application will not be accepted where the only reason it was not lodged earlier was that the student was waiting to receive a mark or result for the Assessment Task.
- Late applications lodged more than seven (7) calendar days after the Assessment Task due date and after unit results for the relevant Teaching Period have been officially released and published via eStudent will not ordinarily be accepted. Any exception will only be considered in the most serious and well-documented circumstances, at the discretion of the relevant authority, in accordance with the Policy.

PLANNED EXTENSION ACTIVATION (IEAP STUDENTS)

Students with an Individual Education Access Plan (IEAP) that includes a Planned Extension may activate that adjustment for eligible Assessment Tasks by lodging a Special Consideration application on or before the due date of the Assessment Task. Students are strongly encouraged to lodge their application well in advance of the due date (a minimum of two (2) weeks prior is recommended) to ensure timely processing. An application to activate a Planned Extension cannot be lodged after the due date of the Assessment Task has passed.

A Planned Extension activation application is administrative in nature and will not be assessed against the eligibility criteria in the Policy or the eligibility and evidence requirements set out in this Schedule. No supporting evidence is required; the student's current IEAP confirming the Planned Extension adjustment is sufficient.

Students should refer to the **IEAP Planned Extension Guide**, published on the Accessibility and Disability Services website, for information about which Assessment Tasks are eligible, which are not, and how to submit an activation application. This guide is maintained by the Accessibility Service and updated from time to time; the eligibility criteria and requirements it contains are determined by the Accessibility Service.

Where a student requires a further extension beyond their Planned Extension, they must lodge a separate Special Consideration application supported by appropriate evidence in accordance with this Schedule. The application will be assessed against the eligibility requirements of the Policy and the evidence requirements of this Schedule in the usual way. Approval is not guaranteed.