

Special Consideration Policy and Procedures

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Approval Authority Mana Whakaae	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Contact Officer Āpiha Whakapā	Academic Quality and Records Team Leader – Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Introduction | Kupu Whakataki

Special considerations enable the just and equitable treatment of students who suffer unexpected and significant impairment during an assessment task, including final examinations and internal assessments.

Definitions | Tautuhinga

Acute – a short-term condition or incident not exceeding seven days (an event of a short duration).

Chronic – a condition persisting for a long time (more than seven days) or constantly recurring.

Impairment – the impact of an event that affects the ability to undertake or show learning. Impairment is measured on a six-point scale of negligible, no impact, mild, moderate, serious or severe impairment. An assessor in allocating the measure of impairment requires professional judgement.

Major items of assessment – those items that contribute 10% or more of the entire course assessment weight.

Special Considerations Panel (SCC) – a group of UC academic and general staff members who consider special consideration applications.

Policy Statement | Kaupapa Here

1. Scope

- 1.1 This Policy supports a fair, consistent and transparent special considerations process by detailing
 - general principles about special considerations;
 - policy statements; and
 - guidance on the application process, the assessment of special consideration applications and appropriate academic remedies.
- 1.2 Faculties and departments/schools may specify additional requirements as appropriate to their academic and professional context. Any additional requirements must be consistent with this Policy and its principles.
- 1.3 This Policy, should be read in conjunction with the [Special Consideration Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#). It supersedes all previous Calendar regulations and policies regardless of the original year of enrolment of any student seeking special consideration.

It is recommended that this document be read in full. Reading sections in isolation can lead to overlooking of vital information.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 Special consideration is intended to ensure students who have a significant and unexpected acute impairment are not unduly disadvantaged in an assessment activity.
- 2.2 Special consideration shall not be used to unfairly advantage students who are impaired in assessment, i.e., if a student had been unlikely to achieve academically, they will not benefit from the special consideration process.
- 2.3 While special consideration will benefit students who experience a significant acute impairment due to an illness or other exceptional and/or unforeseen circumstance, there will be circumstances where other University provisions are more appropriate to support students, especially those with chronic conditions:
 - General study support for students with impairments through [Te Ratonga Whaikaha | Student Accessibility Service \(University website\)](#) (including special arrangements for examinations); and/or
 - Course discontinuation where the significant and unexpected impairment prevents completion of the course/s.
- 2.4 Students will only be allowed to apply for one special consideration per assessment item and where an alternative assessment is offered, only in exceptional circumstances with the approval of the appropriate Dean will students be able to apply for a second special consideration for the same assessment item.

- 2.5 Personal information provided by students in support of a special consideration application will be treated in confidence and with care, in accordance with the University's [Privacy Policy \(PDF, 157KB\)](#).

3. Special Considerations Applications

- 3.1 Assessment items contributing less than 10% to the total course grade, unless they are for an assessment which irrespective of weighting could cause direct failure of the whole course (e.g., mastery and mandatory assessments), are minor and must be handled informally by the course coordinator.
- 3.2 Up to 50% of a course may be credited by special consideration across all assessment items for a course; however, where assessment items are greater than 50% a student may still be awarded a special consideration if they complete, subject to availability, alternative and equivalent assessment items.
- 3.3 On the first day of the course, the course coordinator/s must inform students in the course outline, both in the Course Information System (CIS) and on AKO | LEARN, of all assessment items to which special consideration will not apply and the reasons why not.
- 3.4 Third parties, including family members, friends, student support groups, advisors or departments/schools can assist a student to apply for a special consideration. It is important to note that any support offered by a member of the University in compiling an application does not in any way prejudice or predetermine the outcome of the application.
- 3.5 Students must note the following:

3.5.1 Special Consideration Time Frames

- a. Students are strongly encouraged to sit a test or examination or complete an assessment item by the due date, where possible. If a student's performance has been impaired, they must submit a special consideration application on the grounds of impaired performance within five working days of the assessment's due date.
- b. If a student is prevented from sitting a test or examination or completing an assessment item, they must submit a special consideration application for a missed assessment item within five working days of the missed assessment item or within five working days of their last examination during the examination period.
- c. Students must take note of and adhere to the time frames for the submission of special consideration applications. Only in exceptional circumstances will applications outside of the specified time frames be approved.

- d. Lack of awareness of the regulations is not grounds for lateness of an application.
- e. Special consideration for late discontinuation/s will not be granted where the student has sat the final examination for the course/s unless there is an exceptional circumstance to do so which is supported with evidence.

3.5.2 National or International Sporting or Cultural Events

- a. Applicants with national or international sporting or cultural commitments must
 - for a missed test, seek advice and support from their course coordinator; or
 - for a missed examination or a test within the examination period, seek approval from the Examinations Arrangement Senior Coordinator who will arrange, as appropriate, an alternative examination arrangement (see [Appendix 1: Alternative Arrangements for Representative Sports and Cultural Events](#)).
- b. Applicants with national or international sporting or cultural commitments can only be offered an extension, special facilities or undertake an assessment at an alternative time (at the discretion of the Examinations Arrangements Senior Coordinator or Course Coordinator).

3.5.3 Religious Observances

- a. As a multi-faith environment, the University acknowledges religious differences. If a student is unable to complete or sit an assessment item due to a religious observance, reasonable alternative arrangements will be made. Students must inform their course coordinator in a timely manner of any assessment items which may require an alternative arrangement due to religious observances so that prior arrangements can be made.
- b. Such arrangements are informal, and students do not need to apply for special consideration.
- c. Fasting, as a religious observance which may not lend itself to an informal solution, will be assessed as 'moderate impairment' for afternoon tests and examinations. Please refer to [Appendix 2: Ramadan Guidelines for Students and Staff](#) for more information regarding Ramadan.

4. Extensions

- 4.1 If a student is seeking an extension of time to complete an assessment item, such as an essay, assignment or project, they should not submit a special consideration application. Students must speak to the course coordinator or appropriate delegate for an appropriate extension of time to complete the work (with or without an academic penalty) at the earliest opportunity. In exceptional circumstances, a student may still

submit a special consideration application, for impaired performance or if the assessment is not submitted, but if an extension has been granted it will be considered when determining (if appropriate) the academic remedy/ies for the application.

5. Special Considerations on Compassionate Grounds

- 5.1 On rare occasions when a significant and unexpected event/disaster occurs which results in extreme emotional distress for a large cohort of students, the University may instigate the Special Considerations on Compassionate Grounds process (the SC/C process). The SC/C process which is depicted in [Appendix 3: Special Consideration on Compassionate Grounds Process](#), provides an opportunity for the University to work with affected students to ensure they receive special considerations for an approved period. The SC/C application process will be simplified and require a light burden of proof.
- 5.2 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) will authorise the use of the SC/C process and specify its duration. The Special Considerations Coordinator, SCC Chairperson and the University's Student Care Team will work together to finalise the details of the SC/C process, as applicable to the event, and to identify and support the students eligible to apply.

6. Appeals

- 6.1 For information pertaining to UC's appeals process please refer to
- [Appeals Regulations](#)
 - [Academic Appeal Procedures – Guide for Students](#).

Procedures

7. Application Process

- 7.1 Application(s) for special consideration (for both impaired performance / missed assessment or late discontinuation/s) are submitted electronically to the Special Considerations Coordinator. The application then passes through two distinct stages:
- Stage One: Application and supporting evidence considered by the Special Considerations Committee (SCC); and
 - Stage Two: If the application is approved, application of the academic remedy.
- 7.2 Appendices 4 and 5 depict the special consideration process from the perspectives of both a student and a University staff member [Appendix 4: Special Consideration – Student Perspective](#) and [Appendix 5: Special Consideration – University Staff Member Perspective](#) respectively.

8. Stage One: Evidence Considered by the SCC

- 8.1 The special consideration application, including all supporting evidence, is assessed by the SCC. The SCC will assess the impact and severity of the application as well as taking into consideration previous applications for special consideration submitted by the student, along with previous decisions of the SCC regarding other cases on similar grounds to the application.
- 8.2 Applications will be
- approved by the SCC and will proceed to Stage Two; or
 - rejected; or
 - recommended for alternative consideration (e.g., late discontinuation) if the assessed criteria are met.
- 8.3 Evidence must be supplied for all types of special consideration applications and examples of the required evidence are described in the [Special Consideration Regulations](#). Evidence must be provided within 10 working days of the application being submitted, otherwise it will be rejected by the Special Considerations Coordinator.
- 8.4 The list of approved health professionals is given in [Appendix 6: List of Approved Health Professionals](#).
- 8.5 In considering an application, the SCC will consider both
- the severity and duration of the impairment, and
 - the acuteness and foreseeability of the events responsible for the impairment.
- 8.6 For a special consideration to be awarded on the grounds of
- impaired performance, the severity of the effects of the causative event or condition must be assessed as **moderate** or higher; and
 - a missed assessment/examination, the effects of the causative event or condition must be assessed as **serious** or higher.
- 8.7 Special consideration for assessment items will not be approved for chronic illnesses, disabilities, or injuries or events that may impair a student's ability to learn the material for the course/s concerned. In this situation alternative arrangements may be appropriate and agreed to by the student; these include:
- a study plan arranged by a Dean, or
 - arrangements as assessed by the [Te Ratonga Whaikaha | Student Accessibility Service \(University website\)](#).
- 8.8 Where applications for special consideration by a student are repeatedly made for substantially the same underlying reason then the application may be rejected on the grounds that the reason is chronic rather than acute. Note however, that unforeseeable relapses of chronic illnesses, disabilities or injuries may qualify for

special consideration.

- 8.9 Summary information, regardless of the outcome, will be forwarded to the relevant departments/schools for the student's application for the purposes of keeping them informed. Where an application has been approved, a department/school will be provided, where possible, with a guideline categorisation score to assist with them with the application of an academic remedy. The Special Considerations Coordinator will select one of the following categories, where possible, based on the evidence provided:

Category	Degree of impact on Academic Functioning
Undetermined (1)	Unable to assess the impact of the assessment item. The impact of the student's application is undetermined. Additional information can be requested.
No impact (2)	The circumstance/s has/have not had an impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment/s or exam (i.e., normal range of anxiety about sitting an examination or completing an assessment).
Mild (3)	The circumstance/s for the application are not serious and have not had an impact on the student's ability to complete the assessment/s or exam/s (i.e., cold or headache, mild toothache, hay fever or seasonal allergies).
Moderate (4)	The circumstance/s for the application mean that the student may be able to fulfil some academic obligations but performance is considerably affected – the student may be able to attend some classes, may have decreased concentration, and assignments may be late (i.e., a virus which has caused discomfort, fasting due to religious observance, stomach bug or food poisoning).
Serious (5)	The circumstances for the application have significantly impaired the student's ability to fulfil academic obligations and they are either unable to complete an assignment or attend a test/examination or if they do their performance will be seriously impacted (i.e., wisdom tooth extraction, glandular fever, severe migraine, death of extended family member or friend, assault, concussion / head injury, broken or fractured writing hand or severe asthma attack. Students who are unable to attend an assessment due to having taken a Covid-19 test will fall into this category.
Severe (6)	The circumstance/s has/have left the student unable to function at any academic level – the student may be unable to attend classes or fulfil any academic obligations such as completing an assessment or sitting an exam (i.e., bedridden, hospitalised, death of immediate family member or extreme trauma).

8.10 In reference to [clause 8.6](#) above, an approved special consideration must have a causative event or condition of moderate (4) degree or higher for it to be approved by the SCC. Departments/schools will receive, where possible, a guideline categorisation score of either 1 (undetermined when the impact cannot be assessed), 4 (moderate), 5 (serious) or 6 (severe). Applications with a categorisation score of no impact (2) or mild (3) will not be approved.

8.11 When applying, students will be offered an opt-in service to have their name shared with an appropriate student support service, which can offer follow-up support. The Special Considerations Coordinator will forward the name and number of a student to an appropriate support service.

9. Stage Two: Academic Remedies

9.1 If an application is approved on evidential grounds, the Special Considerations Coordinator will send it to the relevant academic department or school for the application of an appropriate academic remedy or remedies.

Special Consideration for Impaired Performance / Missed Assessment:

9.2 This may be granted when a student is prevented from

- completing a major item of assessment, or
- where a student's performance has been impaired,

due to a short-term/acute illness or injury or reasonably unforeseeable circumstances; and meets

- the required level of categorisation as outlined in [clause 8.6](#) above, and
- the required time frame as outlined in [clause 3.5.1](#) above.

A student may also apply on the basis that disrupted revision due to one of these causes has resulted in impaired performance.

9.3 It is intended to assist students who have covered the work of a course but were prevented from demonstrating their mastery of the material or skills at the time of the assessment. It is not available where the impairment has prevented the student from learning the material or where the student has not engaged with the course.

9.4 The remedies for the Special Consideration of Assessment items are specified at Regulation 7 of the [Special Consideration Regulations](#).

9.5 The following must be noted:

- The preferred academic remedies are to offer the student an extension (Regulation 7a) or an alternate special assessment (Regulation 7d) as these provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the subject.

- Where there is sufficient time, an applicant with a disability can apply to sit a test or examination with special facilities. Eligible applicants must refer to the [Disability and Impairment Policy \(PDF, 273KB\)](#) for further information.
- When an alternative special assessment, being either an alternative test or examination (as set out at Regulation 7d), has been awarded, a student cannot subsequently apply for a special consideration for the alternative special assessment.
- The postfix 'AEG' should be used only when a passing grade has been derived (i.e., it is not necessary for a D or E grade).

Special Consideration for Late Discontinuation:

- 9.6 A student may apply for special consideration for a late withdrawal where the student has been prevented from completing the course/s, due to circumstances beyond the student's control or that were not reasonably foreseeable, and was unable to withdraw from the course/s by the published withdrawal deadline.
- 9.7 As per [Special Consideration Regulation 8](#), the Dean of the relevant Academic Division will determine, in consultation with the relevant course coordinator/s, whether or not to approve an application for late discontinuation. Approval will be dependent on determining that the student has not completed or engaged in the course of study.
- 9.8 Special consideration for late discontinuation will in most cases not be granted where the student has sat the final examination for the course/s that are the subject of the application.

Related Documents and Information | He Kōrero Anō

UC Regulations | Ngā Waeture

- [Appeals Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#)
- [Fees and Fines Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#)
- [Special Consideration Regulations \(University Regulations website\)](#)

UC Policy Library | Te Pātaka Kaupapa Here

- [Academic Appeal Procedures – Guide for Students](#)
- [Disability and Impairment Policy \(PDF, 273KB\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy \(PDF, 157KB\)](#)

UC Website and Intranet | Te Pae Tukutuku me te Ipurangiroto o UC

- [Te Ratonga Whaikaha | Student Accessibility Service \(University website\)](#)

Appendices | Tāpiritanga

[Appendix 1: Alternative Arrangements for Representative Sports and Cultural Events](#)

[Appendix 2: Ramadan – Guidelines for Students and Staff](#)

[Appendix 3: Special Consideration on Compassionate Grounds Process](#)

[Appendix 4: Special Consideration Process from a Student's Perspective](#)

[Appendix 5: Special Consideration Process from a University Staff Member's Perspective](#)

[Appendix 6: List of Approved Health Professionals](#)

[Appendix 7: Terms of Reference for the Special Considerations Committee](#)

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
<i>For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz</i>			
1.00	Document developed and approved for publishing at commencement of 2016 academic year.	DVC(A)	Feb 2016
1.01	'Faculty' references changed to 'College' to reflect College-Faculty merger.	Policy Unit	Jun 2016
2.00	Scheduled review by CO, minor changes, updating of hyperlinks, content changed to reflect updated Regulations	Policy Unit	Dec 2017
2.01	Removal of fees section during review. Review ongoing.	Policy Unit	October 2020
2.02	Interim amendments, changes to definitions and 2 nd paragraph on page 1.	Policy Unit	June 2021
3.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer.	Council	August 2022

This policy remains in force until it is updated

Appendix 1

Alternative Arrangements for Representative Sports and Cultural Events

The Komiti Whakahaere Ako | Academic Administration Committee adopted the following recommendations for students who seek alternative assessment arrangements to facilitate participation as a national or international representative in national or international sporting or cultural events:

1. Participation includes selection to perform, tour, compete, adjudicate or officiate.
2. That whenever possible, departments/schools should give favorable consideration to making alternative arrangements for such students provided that when making special arrangements, departments/schools give careful consideration to issues of equity with respect to the remainder of the class. In the case of tests, possible alternatives might be
 - a. making arrangements for students on tour to sit a test, at the same time as that scheduled for the test, under the supervision of the team manager or coach, or other suitable person and approved by the Kairuruku Matua Whakamātautau | Examinations Senior Coordinator; or
 - b. permitting the sitting of the test or similar test prior to the departure of students provided that by so doing there is no problem over security.
3. That where students are to be absent from tests or at times scheduled for submission of assessment and wish for special arrangements to be made, and where departments/schools are able to make special arrangements, students must give at least one month's notice of absence (unless the situation arises at short notice) and provide suitable documentation to the Tumuaki Tari/Kura | Heads of Departments/Schools so that departments/schools have time to organise and/or approve any such special arrangements.
4. That departments/schools publicise their policies by appropriate means – through inclusion in departmental handbooks, course outlines and on noticeboards.

The special consideration process for students who apply on these grounds must include a letter of support from the department/school outlining their agreement to such arrangements. The SCC must accept this support and approve the application. The process in these cases is being used for reporting purposes.

Appendix 2

Ramadan – Guidelines for Students and Staff

A Muslim observing Ramadan does not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. Ramadan lasts 30 days and the date on which it starts changes year by year.

Impairment to performance in examinations and tests because of the physiological effects of fasting during Ramadan is permissible as a circumstance in which a student may apply for special consideration. Students will still be expected to sit the examination or test unless prevented from doing so for other reasons.

Special consideration will only be allowed for afternoon examinations or tests and the impairment will normally be judged to be within the 'moderate impairment' range.

Students wishing to apply for a special consideration because of the impairment caused by fasting during Ramadan must provide with their application supporting evidence in the form of a letter from their religious leader attesting to their observance of the fast.

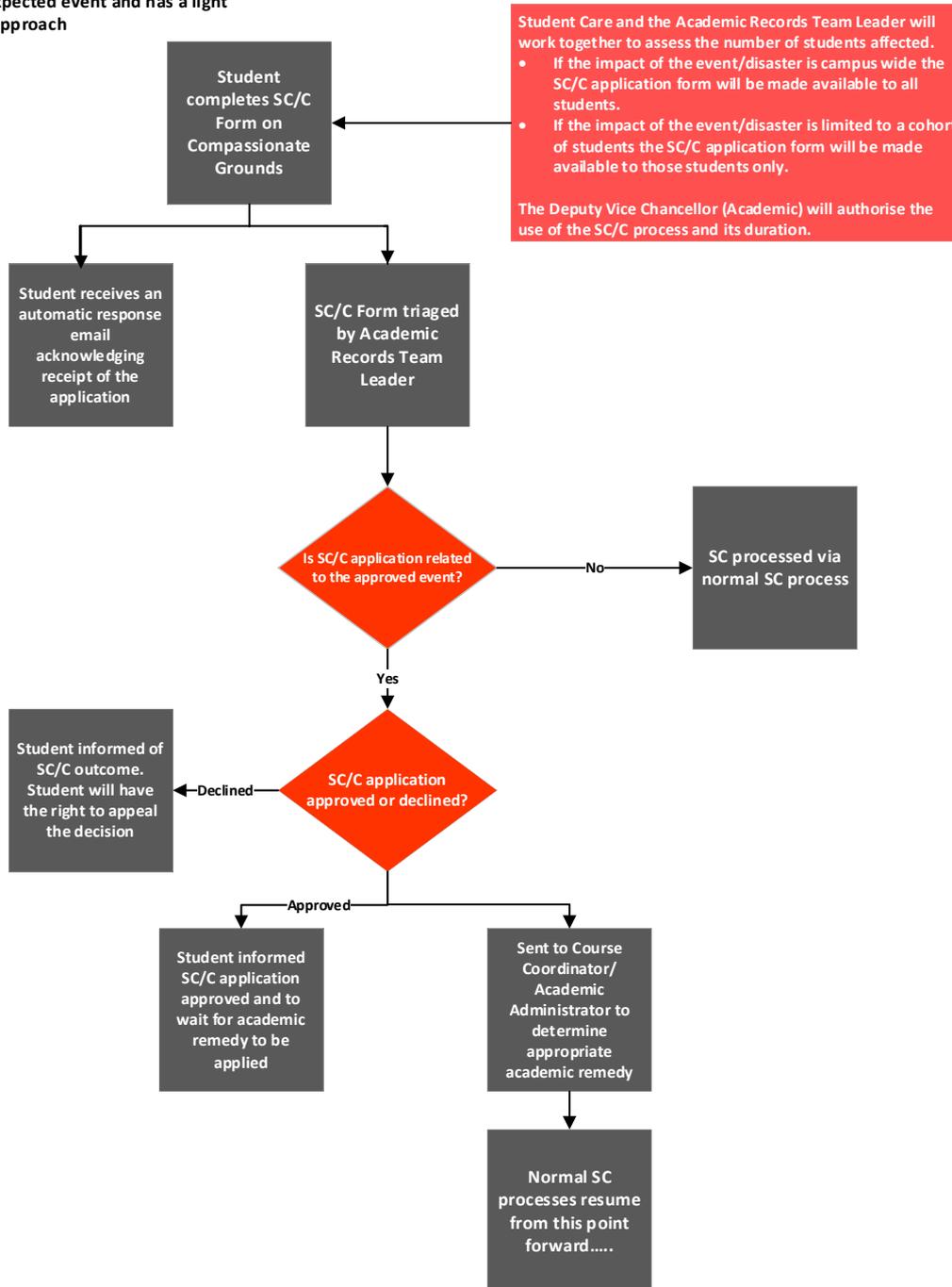
Note: The Islamic calendar is based on lunar months and therefore the month of Ramadan begins 10 or 11 days earlier each year on the Gregorian calendar, hence it takes Ramadan about 30 years to move through the seasons from January to December.

Appendix 3

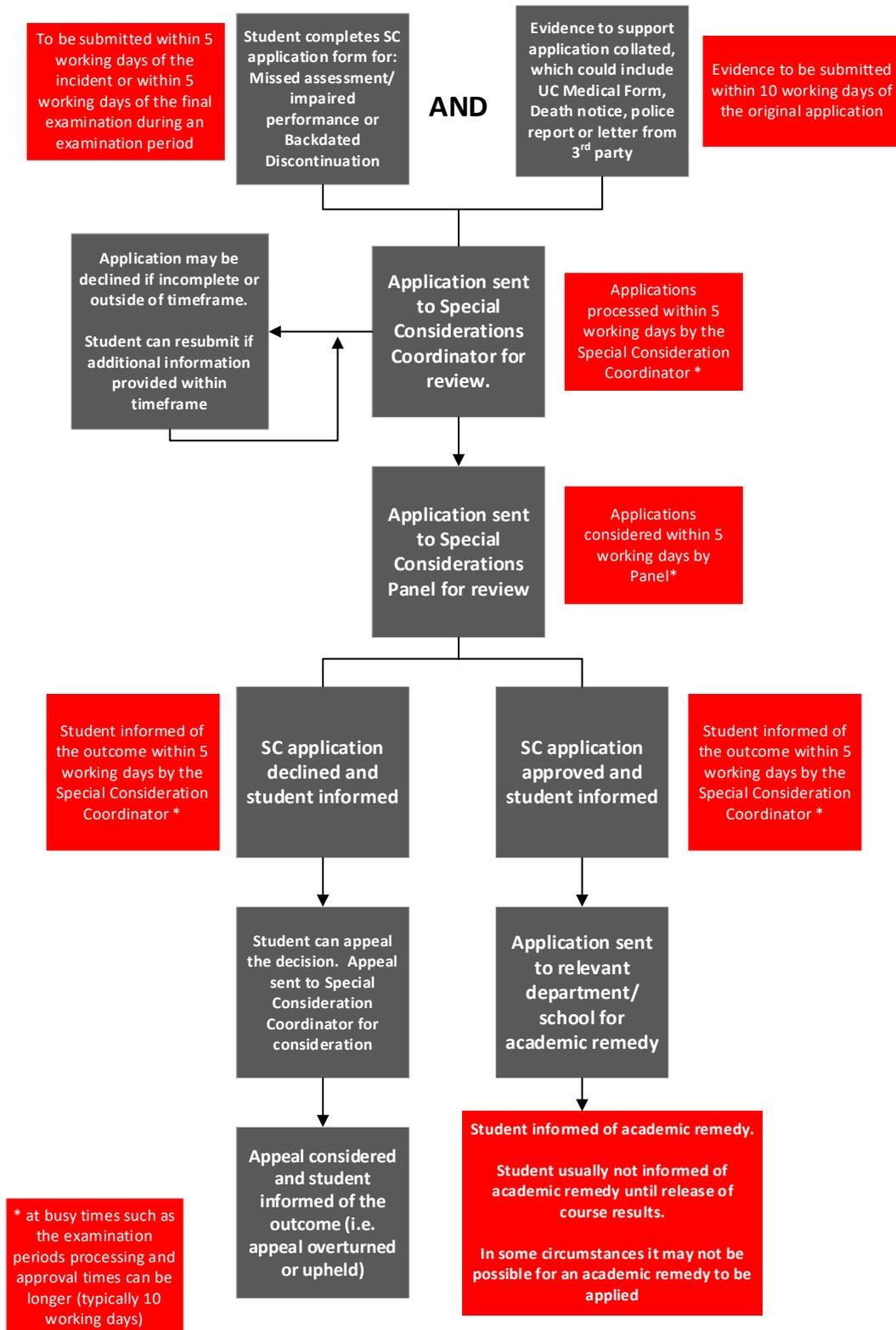
Special Consideration on Compassionate Grounds Process

Special Considerations on Compassionate Grounds (SC/C)

The SC/C process is for emotional distress following a significant disaster or unexpected event and has a light touch approach

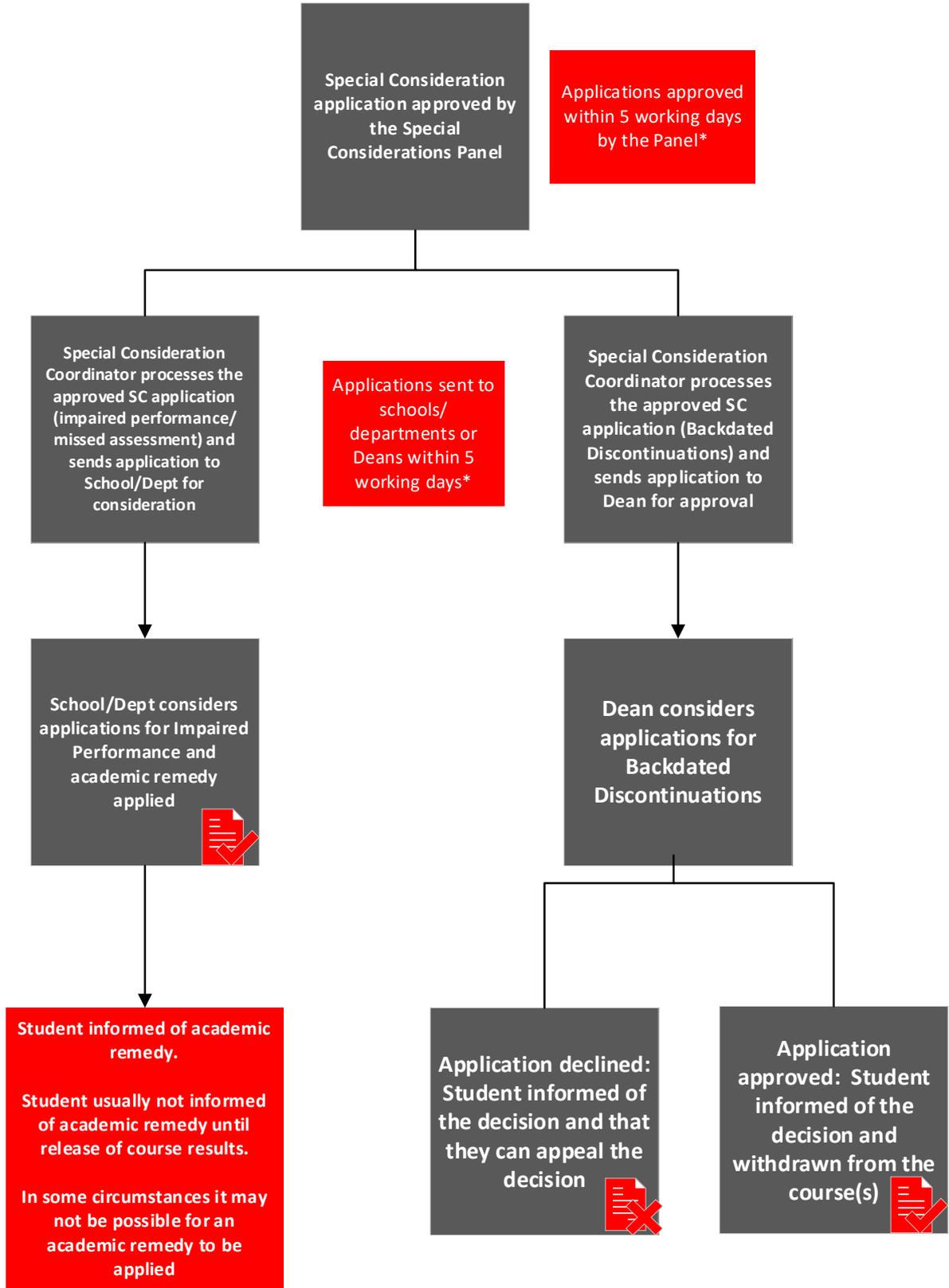


Appendix 4 Special Consideration – Student Perspective



Appendix 5

Special Consideration Process – University Staff Member Perspective



Appendix 6

List of Approved Health Professionals

The following bodies are approved for the purposes of providing supporting medical evidence under Regulation 6 of the Special Consideration Regulations.

- Registered medical practitioner
- Registered dental surgeon
- Registered midwife
- Registered psychologist
- Registered physiotherapist
- Member of the New Zealand Association of Counsellors or other internationally registered Counsellor
- ACC Registered Counsellor
- Member of the New Zealand Association of Psychotherapists or other internationally registered Counsellor
- Student counsellors from the University Health Centre
- Student Care Advisor from the University's Student Care Team which includes registered social workers and/or registered nurses.

Please note that since early 2020 and the emergence of COVID-19 medical appointments may be in person, by telephone or via other electronic forms of communication. The consultation conditions will be noted on the UC Medical Form.

Students should ask the health professional to complete the 'UC Medical Form for Special Consideration' which is available from the Special Consideration website. Where a student is assessed by an internationally registered practitioner the UC Medical Form must be stamped to show proof of registration. Students are responsible for providing, at their own expense, a translation into English of a non-English medical form.

If medical evidence is provided which does not provide enough information about the severity, impact or timing of the illness or injury then the SCC can request additional medical evidence to be provided, at the student's expense.

Appendix 7



Terms of Reference for Special Considerations Committee

- 1.1 Special consideration applications are reviewed by the Special Consideration Committee (SCC). The SCC will consist of the following members:
- A Chairperson nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) – currently the Academic Quality and Records Team Leader.
 - Up to two members nominated by each of the Academic Divisional Deans, to be approved by the Komiti Whakahaere Ako | Academic Administration Committee.
- Note: SCC members cannot also be members of the Academic Appeals Committee.*
- 1.2 The Secretary of the SCC is the Special Considerations Coordinator.
- 1.3 The SCC will appoint observers / advisors to assist it as it sees necessary for the purposes of equity and diversity and the understanding of medical issues.
- 1.4 The SCC will report annually to the Komiti Whakahaere Ako | Academic Administration Committee and its membership will be confirmed annually.
- 1.5 In certain cases, decisions can be made by an individual as follows, without recourse to the SCC as a whole:
- In cases dealing with particularly sensitive information, such as sexual harm, the Chairperson of the SCC will have executive authority to make decisions.
 - In cases where the outcome of an application is clear and obvious and supported with evidence (i.e., immediate family death in the days prior to an examination or submission of an assessment), the Special Considerations Coordinator will have executive authority to approve applications.
 - In cases of late arrivals or missed tests or examinations, the Kairuruku Matua Whakamātautau | Examinations Arrangements Senior Coordinator will have executive authority to make decisions.
- 1.6 The SCC may use decisions made for other applications based on similar evidence to guide its decision-making.