



Royal Australasian College
of Dental Surgeons
Let knowledge conquer disease

Special Consideration in Assessment Policy

June 2014

Document Information

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Purpose and scope

To provide guidance regarding the circumstances under which special consideration may be given in relation to assessments and examinations, as well the process for application for special consideration.

1. College mission statement

To promote the study of the science and art of dentistry; to encourage research in clinical science and the practice of dentistry; to bring together dentists for scientific discussions and clinical demonstrations; and to disseminate knowledge of the principles and practice of dentistry for the benefit of the community.

To promote excellence in the provision of dental education, continuing professional development and a range of internationally recognised educational qualifications in all aspects of dentistry.

2. College core values

The following values underpin all policy decisions of the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons:

- **Standards:** to strive for excellence at all times
- **Fairness and equity:** to respect the individual and adhere to all principles of equal opportunity
- **Ethical Conduct:** to ensure honesty, integrity and transparency at all times
- **Commitment:** to support the College in achieving the aims of its mission
- **Collaboration:** to encourage collegiality and professional development
- **Advocacy:** to advocate for improvements in dental education as it relates to improving the oral health status of the communities which we serve.

3. Background

The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons understands the pressures candidates experience when undertaking studies and completing College training programs. This policy outlines the criteria and mechanisms by which College candidates undertaking formal assessment may advise the College of, and the College may consider, special circumstances or disability which may adversely impact on their training assessment, examination or other evaluation processes.

This policy applies to those assessments which are formally scheduled, such as assessments with due date requirements and written and viva examinations.

The College will consider requests for special consideration of circumstances or conditions that may have significant impact on or disadvantage a candidate's ability to complete an assessment or examination within the standard procedures and timing. The College is unable to determine in advance all circumstances that might lead to the granting of special consideration. Each case will be considered on its merits in accordance with this policy.

Candidates who believe their performance is likely to be seriously affected by illness or personal circumstances should consider deferment of the assessment or examination.

4. *Policy Statement*

1. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Special circumstances may apply to any form of College assessment.

Consideration may be given to candidates where disability, illness, misadventure or other serious cause beyond the control of the individual has had an effect on performance, attendance or ability to meet an assessment completion date.

Applications for special circumstances are classified on the following grounds, which may be temporary or permanent:

1.1. Medical - including, but not limited to:

- a) Serious illness or injury, including mental health;
- b) Physical trauma leading to impairment or disability;
- c) Complications from pregnancy.

1.2. Compassionate - including, but not limited to:

- a) Death of an immediate family member, partner or close relative;
- b) Serious illness, injury or incapacitation of an immediate family member, partner or close relative.

1.3. In the case of requiring an assessment extension, circumstances that have severely impacted on the candidate's day to day ability to complete an assessment task on time.

1.4. Disability

It is the candidate's responsibility to determine his/her physical and/or mental fitness to attend and candidates have the opportunity to withdraw should any circumstance have the potential to impact on their performance.

2. APPLICATION FOR CONSIDERATION OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

2.1. Medical Grounds

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

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

2.2. Compassionate Grounds

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

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

2.3. Grounds of Disability

The College will endeavour to provide the optimal examination 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 College 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 circumstances 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 circumstances application; and
- b) Clear instructions for the provision of specified requirements.

Applicants (in relation to any of the above categories) may be requested to supply further information or documentation, as required by the College.

2.4. Circumstances **NOT** Constituting adequate grounds for Special Consideration

Circumstances which may not constitute adequate grounds include, but are not limited to:

- a) Ordinary or expected stress or anxiety associated with examinations or assessment;
- b) Minor illnesses or medical conditions;
- c) Mistaken timing or difficulties locating an assessment venue;
- d) Optional commitments of a personal nature;
- e) English as a second language;
- f) Adherence to ratified College policies, such as the Refund Policy, the Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy, or the OTOMS Specialist Assessment (Australia) Policy.

3. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

The College will consider requests to accommodate candidates with legitimate religious observance requirements, where that observance prohibits participation in an assessment or examination at a particular time or on a particular day. In considering such applications, the College will take into account what might reasonably be expected to occur in the workplace and include the impact on the viability of the event, other practitioners and health care professionals, the provision of health services and additional costs. The College may also seek advice from an authority in the particular religion prior to making a determination. On request, candidates must submit such supporting and/or clarifying information and documentation as the College may reasonably require in considering the application.

4. APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications for special circumstances must be submitted on the relevant application form which is available from www.racds.org

The application form must be accompanied by a letter from the applicant detailing the circumstances including the impact on their performance or ability to present for or complete the assessment, as follows:

- 4.1. Medical or Compassionate grounds: within 3 days (before or after) of the date of the assessment or examination, or within such other period which the responsible education committee see fit.
- 4.2. Disability grounds: 90 days prior to the assessment or examination date.
- 4.3. Religious observance - at least six (6) months prior to the date of the assessment or examination (so that alternative arrangements may be considered).

Individuals submitting an application for special circumstances must submit relevant supporting documentation as outlined in sections 2 and 3 above, at the time of application. Supporting documentation submitted at a later date may not have the opportunity to be considered and will only be considered at the discretion of the Censor in Chief.

Supporting documentation will only be accepted from appropriate professionals e.g., medical practitioners, lawyers, psychologists, police etc. Medical certification can only be provided by the treating practitioner. Supporting documentation cannot be submitted when issued or signed by a family member.

5. REVIEW OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES APPLICATIONS

Applications will be reviewed by the Director of Education, Assessment and Accreditation and then submitted to the relevant Registrar, Assistant Registrar, Board of Studies or committee for consideration. Further information may be requested at the discretion of the Director or relevant reviewer.

On the basis of the information provided by the candidate, the following may be taken into account:

- 5.1.** The severity of the circumstances and factors involved;
- 5.2.** The likely effect on the applicant;
- 5.3.** The candidate's performance in other items of assessment;
- 5.4.** History of previous applications for special consideration.

All applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome within four weeks of receipt of the application.

Special consideration granted to a candidate is not on-going and is only applicable to a single assessment or examination. A new application and supporting documentation must be made for each subsequent consideration unless otherwise stated.

6. APPEALS

Decisions relating to applications for special circumstances may be appealed in accordance with the Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy, accessible on the College's website www.racds.org