Assessment for Learning - Adjustments to Assessment Procedure (HE)

Section 1 - Summary

(1) The purpose of this Procedure is to outline the types of adjustments to assessment for which a student may apply, or which may be granted, to enable a student to maintain their academic progress despite adverse circumstances.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. courses offered within all Higher Education (HE) coursework courses; and
b. non-award courses offered by HE Colleges where the University is assessing performance.

It does not apply to the research component of higher degree by research courses, Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses, or VET-based non-award courses.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Assessment for Learning Policy.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Chief Student Officer	Responsible for accommodating students with a disability or medical condition that may impact upon a student's studies.
Disability and Accessibility Services	Responsible for supporting students with a disability or medical condition that may impact upon a student's studies.
Course Chair	Responsible for reviewing special consideration outcomes, managing errors in published results. Responsible for checking and authorising special and alternative exams.
Unit Convenor	Responsible for determining special consideration outcomes, and providing eligible students with assessment adjustments.
Student Advising	Responsible for processing applications for short extension of time for submission of assessable work in advance of due date.
Progress and Special Consideration Team	Responsible for processing applications for special consideration.

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Part B - Types of Adjustments Available

(4) When a student's capacity to undertake or complete an assessment is affected by circumstances that place them at an unfair disadvantage, the following arrangements may apply:

a. Short extension of time for submission of assessable work (see Part C).
b. Special consideration (see Part D).
c. Reasonable assessment adjustments as outlined in an Access Plan (see Part E).

(5) Documentary evidence requirements:

a. Documentary evidence must be submitted with each short extension request.
b. Documentary evidence must be submitted with each special consideration application.
c. Documentary evidence to register for an Access Plan (AP) need only be submitted when initially registering with Disability & Accessibility Services.

(6) Loss or corruption of digital files does not constitute exceptional circumstances without other extenuating circumstances such as outlined above. Students are advised to ensure that they maintain copies of digital files.

(7) The general rule is that students are required to submit assessment items and/or ensure performance-based assessment is completed by the advertised due dates.

(8) The standard penalty for late submission without an approved extension will be 5% of the total possible mark per day. If submission is overdue by more than three (3) days in a 4-week Block, six (6) days overdue in an 8-week Block, five (5) days for VU Online, and ten (10) days for all other teaching periods, the work will not be assessed.

(9) Examination papers for every sitting of an examination in a unit will differ from each other (scheduled, alternative, special and supplementary).

a. If special and supplementary examinations are held at the same time, a single paper may be used for both purposes.
b. The exam papers will be checked and authorised by the Unit Convenor, see Assessment for Learning - Moderation and Validation Procedure, Part C.

Part C - Short extensions of time for submission of assessable work

(10) Short extensions of time for submission of work (short extension) of five (5) days or less from the original due date are managed by Student Advising.

(11) Where a student knows in advance they will be prevented from submitting an assessment item on time, by circumstances outside their control, they may apply for a short extension.

(12) Students requesting a short extension must apply at least one (1) working day before the original due date.

(13) Short extensions can only be applied to certain assessment types, such as assignments and reports. Short extensions cannot be applied to examinations or performance-based assessments.

(14) Applications for short extension must be made as outlined on the 'Short extensions & special consideration' webpage.

(15) Where a student cannot apply for a short extension at least one (1) working day before the deadline for submission they should apply for special consideration.

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(16) Student Advising will notify the student within one (1) working day in a 4-week Block, two (2) working days in an 8-week Block and for VU Online, and three (3) working days for all other teaching periods, of receipt of the application whether the short extension has been granted. Students seeking a short extension are advised to submit the work to the assessor as soon as they can, to minimise deduction of marks if the short extension is not granted.

(17) Student Advising is responsible for maintaining records of all short extension applications and outcomes.

(18) If the request for a short extension does not meet the criteria, the student will be advised they can apply for special consideration.

Part D - Special consideration

(19) Special consideration is available for students who experience acute unexpected circumstances which have an adverse impact on their performance in assessable tasks, submission of assessment tasks or examination attendance.

(20) Applications must be made within three (3) working days of the submission date of the assessment (unless exceptional circumstances apply). Advice on exceptional circumstances is available from Student Advocacy.

(21) Special consideration applications can be used for any form of assessment including, but not limited to:

a. assignment
b. examination
c. laboratory experiment
d. literature report
e. portfolio
f. presentation
g. tests

(22) Acute unexpected circumstances are defined as life events which have a high impact and which cannot be predicted. Circumstances may include (but are not limited to):

a. an unexpected mental or physical health condition or accident,
b. difficult personal circumstances or significant emotional disturbance,
c. death of a close family member,
d. severe disruption of living arrangements,
e. hardship, trauma, being a victim of crime, or having concerns about safety,
f. military, jury, or emergency services obligations,
g. an unavoidable family, cultural, religious, or elite sporting commitment,
h. an unavoidable and essential employment obligation.

(23) Applications for special consideration must be made as outlined in on the Short extensions & special consideration web page.

(24) Applications for special consideration relating to an examination on medical grounds only, with required documentation, will be determined by the Progress & Special Consideration team, who will grant the student a special examination if all documentation is correct.

(25) All other applications for special consideration will be referred to the Unit Convenor for decision.

(26) Students who are granted special consideration may be provided:

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a. an extension of time (for assessments including projects, assignments and/or presentations)
b. a special examination
c. an alternative assessment task
d. a modified assessment task
e. removal of a late penalty.

(27) There are some circumstances in which it may not be possible to approve assessment adjustments. Students may be referred to Student Advocacy for advice on whether they would be eligible to apply for remission of the academic result and fees incurred in accordance with the Enrolments Procedure.

(28) If a student is dissatisfied with a decision regarding Special Consideration, they can request a review of the decision by the Course Chair or equivalent.

(29) Such a request for review must be made within three (3) working days of the student receiving notification of the initial decision.

(30) The Course Chair will consider the student's case and determine:

a. That special consideration should be granted; or
b. That special consideration should be denied.

(31) Their decision will be communicated to the student, the Progress and Sepcial Consideration team, and the Unit Convenor within three (3) working days of the request for review.

Part E - Ongoing modified assessment arrangements

(32) The University provides reasonable adjustments and modified assessment arrangements to accommodate students with a disability or health condition, and students who provide personal support as carers for individuals with disability or health conditions, in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

(33) Eligible students can register with Disability & Accessibility Services to obtain an Access Plan, as outlined on the Disability and Accessibility Services webpage.

(34) An Access Plan is sufficient evidence of eligibility for reasonable adjustments and modified assessment arrangements. Students with Access Plans are not required to provide any additional documentation regarding their disability or health condition when requesting modified assessment arrangements due to the impacts of their disability or health condition. Students with Access Plans are not required to apply for special consideration for reasonable adjustments related to their disability or health condition.

(35) Students with Access Plans are still required to apply for special consideration if acute unexpected circumstances not related to their disability or health condition which have an adverse impact on their performance in assessable tasks, submission of assessment tasks or examination attendance.

(36) To obtain an Access Plan, the student must provide Disability & Accessibility Services with documentary evidence from a qualified professional in the relevant field. The documentation should explicitly address:

a. the nature of the disability or health condition,
b. the impact the disability or health condition is likely to have on the student's ability to complete assessment activities,
c. recommended support services and/or reasonable adjustments,

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d. the recency of the certification/assessment of impairment.

(37) The Access Plan summarises the recommendations of Disability & Accessibility Services, based upon the student's needs and the documentary evidence, for the student to be provided:

a. Academic support workers,
b. Assistive technology and equipment,
c. Reasonable adjustments to assessable tasks,
d. Reasonable adjustments to Work Integrated Learning (placement),
e. Reasonable adjustments to teaching practices.

(38) Reasonable adjustments refer to a measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is considered reasonable if it achieves this purpose while balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

(39) Reasonable adjustments and modified assessment arrangements do not represent a weakening or lowering of the academic standard being assessed. Students must still meet the inherent requirements and learning outcomes of the course and units of study.

(40) To arrange reasonable adjustments and modified assessments in a unit of study, the Unit Convenor and other relevant staff must be provided with the student's Access Plan in a timely manner, as outlined on the Disability and Accessibility Services webpage.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(41) HESF: Standard 1.4 Learning Outcomes and Assessment; 2.3.1 Wellbeing and Safety.

Section 6 - Definitions

(42) Alternative Assessment: An assessment task provided at a different time to eligible students. Alternative assessments must not be identical to, but must be equivalent to, the regularly scheduled assessment task.

(43) Assessment: Victoria University defines assessment as the methods and procedures by which a student's academic progress and standard, at a given time, are measured. Within this single definition, the University recognises three broad types of assessment:

a. diagnostic — assessment that identifies the level of competency/performance/ knowledge before commencing learning in a course/ program/ learning experience but does not contribute to the student's final grade;
b. formative — assessment that provides feedback to the student during the learning experience;
c. summative — assessment that is focussed on the outcomes of the learning experience.

(44) Award Course: The overall program of study in which the student is enrolled which leads to an Award of the University in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). An Award is often referred to by the name of the expected terminal qualification arising from it (eg Bachelor of Business course, Graduate Diploma of Marketing course).

(45) Block

(46) Access Plan: An individualised plan developed by a student and the University (via Disability & Accessibility

Services) which documents the student's individual needs for adjustment to learning and assessment conditions, how these will be implemented, and how the student will be supported to succeed in their studies. In offshore locations, these services may be delivered by VU's partner organisation.

(47) Modified Assessment: An adjustment or alteration to the standard conditions or format of assessment. It can apply to any formal assessment task or examination. Modifications can include the time allowed to complete the assessment; the conditions under which the assessment is completed; or any aids or assistance required by the student.

(48) Non-Award Course: Non-Award courses are courses that do not lead to the issuance of an Award of the University in line with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF).

(49) Special consideration: A form of adjustment for students who experience acute unexpected circumstances which have an adverse impact on their performance in assessable tasks, submission of assessment tasks or examination attendance.

(50) Supplementary assessment: "Second-chance" assessment offered in certain circumstances to students who meet the relevant criteria as set out in the Supplementary Assessment and Conceded Pass Procedure (HE). Supplementary assessment is not the same as alternative assessment, which refers to first-chance assessments provided at a different time to eligible students, or modified assessment, which refers to assessment with altered conditions to accommodate a student's individual needs.

(51) Unit: An individual subject within a course.

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Block" - A delivery period in which all learning activities and assessments, moderation and result release in units of study are completed within: Four-weeks for all undergraduate units, and postgraduate units in the Colleges of Arts & Education, Health & Biomedicine, Law & Justice and Sport & Exercise Science; or Eight-weeks for postgraduate units in the VU Business School and College of Engineering & Science and units/courses delivered through VU Online.

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