

# Assessment for Learning - Adjustments to Assessment Procedure (HE)

## Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(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 / Application

(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 - Definitions

(3) Access Plan: An individualised plan developed by a student and the University (via the Disability Support office) 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.

(4) Alternative examinations: An examination provided in place of a regularly scheduled examination (either before or after the regularly scheduled examination) to a student who meets the criteria established in Part F of this Procedure. Alternative examination papers must not be identical to, but must be equivalent to, the regularly scheduled examination.

(5) 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.

(6) 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).

(7) Block

(8) Modified Assessment: An adjustment or alteration to the standard conditions or format of assessment following the development of an Access Plan. 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.

(9) 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).

(10) Special consideration: A form of adjustment of outcome 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; or who require an extension of longer than five (5) days from the due date for an assessment. Special consideration applies to acute events only and can result in the granting of extensions, alternative assessments, or the adjustment of results.

(11) Supplementary assessment: "Second-chance" assessment offered to students who barely fail a unit of study (45 - 49%). 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.

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

## Section 4 - Policy Statement

(13) See [Assessment for Learning Policy](#).

## Section 5 - Procedures

### Part A - Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Students)	Responsible for accommodating students with a disability or medical condition that may impact upon a student's studies.
Disability Liaison Officer (DLO)	Responsible for managing students with a disability or medical condition that may impact upon a student's studies.
Course Chair	Responsible for managing applications for short extension of time for submission of assessable work and errors in published results. Responsible for checking and authorising special and alternative exams.
Unit Convenor	Responsible for reviewing Course and Unit Administrators decision relating to short extension for submission of assessable work, should a student request a review of the decision.
Course and Unit Administrator (CUA)	Responsible for processing applications for short extension of time for submission of assessable work in advance of due date

### Part B - Types of Adjustments Available

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

- a. Short extension of time for submission of assessable work: for applications made in advance for an extension, for factors including an unavoidable employment, family, cultural, religious or elite sporting commitment known in advance, or other unexpected circumstances outside the student's control.
- b. Special consideration: for unexpected short-term physical or mental ill-health or other unexpected circumstances outside the student's control.
- c. Alternative examinations: for exceptional circumstances where students wish to apply for an alternative time during the examination period.

(15) Documentary evidence is required for an application for a short extension of time, special consideration or alternative examination.

(16) Situations which may lead to an application for a short extension of time, special consideration or alternative examination may include:

- a. medical, mental health, or compassionate grounds, such as:
  - i. giving or having just given birth
  - ii. psychological issues
  - iii. surgery
  - iv. illness
  - v. death of a close family member
- b. military service (a record of service requirement is required);
- c. competitive sporting events, at state, national or international level (a letter on company letterhead from the sporting body confirming this commitment needs to be attached to the application form);
- d. religious convictions (a letter from a religious leader needs to accompany the application);
- e. emergency services duty or jury service (a letter from the relevant authority must accompany the application).

(17) Other exceptional circumstances may also be considered e.g. unavoidable work commitments on the day of the assessment event (an employer's letter must accompany the application).

- a. NB: Exceptional circumstances must relate to the date an assessment event, such as an examination, presentation, performance or demonstration, is scheduled; mere overlap with submission of assessment tasks will not be considered grounds for extension or special consideration.

(18) Ongoing modified assessment (special or alternative support) arrangements are provided for students whose ability to participate in assessment is constrained by an ongoing disability or medical condition that may impact upon studies (see Disability Support Office).

(19) 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**

### **Process for granting short extensions**

(20) 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.

(21) Short extensions of time for submission of work (short extension) of five (5) days or less from the original due date are managed by the Course and Unit Administrator. Extensions of longer than five (5) days are possible under a Special Consideration application only, via MyVU.

(22) Special consideration/short extension applications related to COVID-19 will not require additional supporting documentation for approval. Instead students can submit a Student Statement explaining their circumstances and why they are unable to provide the usual supporting documentation.

(23) Where a student will be prevented from submitting an assessment item on time, by circumstances outside their control, they may apply in advance to the relevant Course and Unit Administrator for a short extension to the due date.

(24) Students requesting a short extension must apply at least one (1) working day before the deadline for submission unless exceptional circumstances (e.g. hospitalisation) make this impracticable.

(25) 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.

(26) The standard penalty for late submission without an approved short extension will be 5% of the total possible mark per day. If submission is overdue by more than ten (10) days, five (5) days for VU Online and three (3) days in a Block, the work will not be assessed.

(27) Students apply by completing the '[A142 - Application for Short Extension for Submission of Assessable Work](#)' form and lodging it with the relevant Course and Unit Administrator.

### **Criteria for granting short extensions**

(28) Students may be eligible for short extensions where they will be prevented from submitting the work on time by unexpected circumstances beyond their control.

(29) 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.

(30) The Course and Unit Administrator will notify the student within three (3) working days, or within one (1) working day in a Block and for VU Online, 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.

(31) The Course and Unit Administrator is responsible for maintaining records of all short extension applications and outcomes.

(32) If the Course and Unit Administrator decides to deny the request for a short extension, the student may request that the decision be reviewed by the Unit Convenor or equivalent. Such a request for review must be made within three (3) working days, or within one (1) working day in a Block, of the student receiving notification of the decision of the Course and Unit Administrator.

(33) The Unit Convenor will consider the student's case and determine:

- a. That a short extension should be granted; or
- b. That a short extension should be denied.

(34) Their decision will be communicated to both the student and the Course and Unit Administrator within three (3)

working days of the request for review, or within one (1) working day in a Block and for VU Online.

## Part D - Special consideration

(35) 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; or who require an extension of longer than five (5) days from the due date for an assessment.

(36) Special consideration applications related to COVID-19 will not require additional supporting documentation for approval. Instead students can submit a Student Statement explaining their circumstances and why they are unable to provide the usual supporting documentation.

(37) Applications made within three (3) working days of the submission date of the assessment (unless exceptional circumstances apply). Advice on exceptional circumstances is available at <http://www.vu.edu.au/advocacy> .

(38) Special consideration is available for students who experience unexpected circumstances which have an adverse impact on:

- a. performance in the assessable tasks
- b. submission of assessment tasks
- c. attending examinations

(39) Special consideration applications can be used for any form of assessment including:

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

(40) If a student experiences delays that could not have been foreseen on the way to submit an assessment or sit an exam, they must register their special consideration request through ASKVU as soon as practicable.

(41) 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.

(42) Applications for special consideration must be made as outlined in '[Special consideration, alternative and supplementary exams](#)'.

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

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

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

- a. an extension of time (for assessments including projects, assignments and/or presentations)
- b. a special examination

- c. an alternative assessment activity
- d. removal of a late penalty
- e. adjustments to marks.

(46) In addition, students may be referred to a student advisor for advice on whether they would be eligible to apply for a late withdrawal without academic penalty and/or a fee remission in accordance with the [Remission of Debt and Post-Census Amendment of Enrolment Policy](#).

(47) 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.

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

(49) 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.

(50) Their decision will be communicated to the student, Student Services, and the Unit Convenor within three (3) working days of the request for review.

## **Part E - Alternative examinations**

(51) Students are expected to be available for the duration of the published examination periods. However, in exceptional circumstances, alternative examinations within the current examination period are available for students who apply at least five (5) working days prior to the commencement of the examination period.

(52) Students must complete an [Alternative Examination Time Application Form](#) and must sit the alternative examination within the current examination period.

(53) Students must complete a separate form for each unit of study in which an alternative exam time is requested. The completed form must be lodged at a Student Service Centre at least five (5) working days prior to the commencement of the examination period.

(54) Applications for alternative examinations will not be approved unless they fall within one of the above categories or in exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control and supporting documentation is provided.

(55) Applications for alternative examinations will not be approved where students wish to travel, except on compassionate grounds and where supporting documentation is provided. Booking tickets for overseas or domestic travel is not considered an adequate reason for an alternative examination.

## **Part F - Ongoing modified assessment arrangements**

(56) The University provides modified assessment arrangements to accommodate students with a disability or medical condition that may impact upon their studies, in accordance with the [Disability Discrimination Act \(1992\)](#).

(57) A modified assessment arrangement is an adjustment or alteration to the standard conditions or format of assessment following the development of an Access Plan. It can apply to any formal assessment task or examination.

(58) Applications for a modified assessment arrangement should be made as early as practicable to Disability Support and before assessment occurs. Applications may cover the entirety of the student's course assessments. In the case of offshore delivery, these services may be delivered by VU's partner organisation.

(59) A modified assessment does not represent a weakening or lowering of the academic standard being assessed. Students must still meet the inherent requirements of the assessment tasks for a unit of study.

(60) Special or alternative support arrangements may include, for example:

- a. special seating arrangements
- b. extra time for exams
- c. longer submission times for assignments
- d. adjusted or alternative assessment tasks
- e. use of Auslan interpreters or scribes in tests/exams

(61) The application for ongoing modified assessment must be supported by medical (or other allied health field) documentation from a qualified professional (can be a general practitioner) in the relevant field. It should explicitly address:

- a. the nature of the impairment or condition,
- b. the impact the condition is likely to have on the student's ability to complete assessment activities; and
- c. recommended support services and/or reasonable adjustments,
- d. the recency of the certification/assessment of impairment.

(62) The student must be informed in writing about the outcome of an application for modified assessment as soon as possible. Appropriate documentation concerning the application and outcome should be attached to the student's file.

(63) Review, agreement and communications regarding ongoing modified assessment are managed by Disability Support.

(64) If a student is dissatisfied with a decision regarding modified assessment, they may opt to lodge a Student Complaint via the Student Complaints Resolution process .

## **Section 6 - Guidelines**

(65) [A142 - Application for Short Extension for Submission of Assessable Work](#)

(66) [Unit of Study Guide template](#)

## Status and Details

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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.