



P023 - Special Consideration (Training and Examination) Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the criteria and process for applying for special consideration when sitting an Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians (ACSEP) examination or undertaking ACSEP training assessment activities. The purpose of this policy is to mitigate unreasonable barriers to assessment activities caused by exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances are those not ordinarily encountered or anticipated which are beyond the control of applicants. Applications for special consideration will be considered on their merits in accordance with this policy.

2. Background

It is ACSEP's mission to provide and promote excellence in training and continuing professional development. This policy supports this mission by establishing an appropriate approach for facilitating and managing fair examination and training assessment processes. This policy details the ground for special consideration, how and when special consideration applications must be made, how they will be considered by the relevant ACSEP body/bodies and the possible outcomes of an application for special consideration.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the most recent ACSEP Training Manual, training documentation and other relevant ACSEP policies, including *P019 Reconsideration, Review & Appeals Policy*, *P024 – Entrance Examination Policy* and *P025 – Fellowship Examination Policy*.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all Registrars, Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) and prospective applicants for the ACSEP Specialist Training Program ("Training Program") sitting the ACSEP Entrance Examination, collectively referred to as 'applicants' for the purpose of this policy.

The following circumstances are not considered to be grounds for special consideration and are not covered by this policy:



- i. Failure to meet the required standard in an ACSEP assessment
- ii. Late examination applications
- iii. Exhausted examination attempts
- iv. Exhausted time limits to complete training

In the above circumstances, applicants should refer to *P019 – Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy* to understand whether there are grounds for reconsideration, review or appeal of an original decision made by ACSEP in respect to these circumstances.

4. Policy Responsibilities & Process

- a) It is the responsibility of applicants to determine their physical and/or mental fitness, and/or the suitability of examination or assessment conditions to participate in any ACSEP examination or assessment process.
- b) Applicants are encouraged to contact ACSEP regarding circumstances as soon as practical.
- c) An applicant can and should withdraw from sitting an examination or assessment should a circumstance have the potential to impact adversely on their performance and there is reasonable time to do so.
- d) Failure to withdraw from an examination/assessment when there was reasonable time to do so will be considered when reviewing all applications.
- e) Where a form or forms of special consideration is/are granted by ACSEP based on exceptional circumstances, this will not excuse the necessities of the applicant meeting a requirement or standard for performance or qualifications which have been objectively set by ACSEP.
- f) Applicants seeking to apply for special consideration for alternative arrangements for examinations/assessments should refer to section 4.4.

4.1 Grounds for Special Consideration

- a) Applicants are eligible to apply for special consideration if an application is made under any one of the following types of special consideration detailed in Table 1 and includes relevant supporting documentation. Any of these can be a one-off circumstance or ongoing and will be considered upon the merits of each situation.



- b) Other types of special consideration which are not listed described in this policy may be considered by ASCEP at its discretion.

Table 1. Types of special consideration and supporting documentation required.

Type of Special Consideration	Description	Examples of Supporting Documentation Required
a) Permanent and longstanding impairment on medical grounds	Must comprise of a diagnosed illness or injury (physical and/or psychological).	Must be accompanied by a current medical report or certificate from a registered medical practitioner in Australia or New Zealand who is the applicant's treating practitioner and not a relative, acquaintance or someone who holds a relationship with the applicant. The medical certificate in respect to applicant's grounds for special consideration must contain details for each of the following points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The nature and severity of the medical condition ii. The medical practitioner's opinion on the effect of the condition on the ability of the individual to participate in the examination/assessment iii. To be considered as valid, the date which the medical practitioner examined the individual must have been prior to and within 1 week or on the date of the examination/assessment but no later.
b) Temporary impairment on medical grounds	Must comprise of a diagnosed illness or injury (physical and/or psychological) and can include a medical condition during pregnancy. Other associated issues related to pregnancy can be considered for special consideration on a case-by-case basis.	
c) Non-medical or compassionate grounds	Circumstances may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The death of a close family member; or ii. Serious illness or injury of a close family member iii. The unexpected preterm birth or unexpected adoption of a child 	Must include, as relevant: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Any bereavement notices (or) ii. A statutory declaration (or) iii. A copy of a police incident report (or) iv. A current medical certificate or report from the treating practitioner where illness of a partner, child or member of the applicant's immediate family, including the name of the person



	iv. Severe stress resulting from extreme hardship or trauma (e.g. victim of crime)	and nature and severity of the illness.
d) Essential commitments (religious, cultural, societal or legal)	These may include, but are not limited to, essential religious observances and cultural practices including contemporary Aboriginal and Māori cultural practices. These can vary from community to community and should be considered on a case-by-case basis. Other commitments should be considered against the ineligible grounds for special consideration in section 4.2.	In respect of religious and cultural observance grounds, the applicant must provide a declaration signifying that they have sought, but have not been able to obtain, dispensation from their religious organisation or community Elder to participate in the assessment on the day or at the time in question. ACSEP may also seek advice from an authority in the religion/cultural group if appropriate prior to assessing an application made on the grounds of religious or cultural observance.
e) Technical problems during an examination or assessment	Technical or procedural issues encountered during an examination will be considered grounds for special consideration only if the circumstance is acknowledged at the time by the examiner. If a technical or procedural issue is encountered during an examination, the applicant must make the examiner aware immediately at time of issue.	The applicant should provide details of the incident and how/when it was brought to the attention of the invigilator, ACSEP Examiners and/or staff members present at the examination venue at the time it occurred.

4.2 Ineligible Grounds for Special Consideration

- a) The following circumstances are not eligible for special consideration:
- i. Stress which would ordinarily be associated with preparation for or performance in examinations or other forms of assessment
 - ii. Stress related to travel arrangements made by the applicant



- iii. Knowingly attempting an assessment with inadequate preparation, in the absence of factors that may be considered exceptional by their nature
- iv. Stress such as resulting from relationship difficulties, minor illness or undiagnosed medical condition affecting the individual
- v. Pre-existing illness or medical condition affecting the immediate family member, partner or close relative which is not regarded as acute and substantive
- vi. Excessive work commitments, including specific rostering arrangements leading up to examinations
- vii. Work-related stress such as may be met during normal medical practice
- viii. The inability of the applicant to organise their time effectively to meet administrative requirements/deadlines
- ix. Ignorance of relevant published regulations and/or policies
- x. Forgetting a deadline/submission date for a work-based assessment
- xi. Computer-related or other similar personal technology failure leading up to examination or assessment due date
- xii. Loss or theft of books or notes or similar materials
- xiii. Decisions to undertake optional commitments of a personal nature
- xiv. Circumstances where alternative arrangements were available
- xv. Demands of community sport, clubs, social or extra-curricular activity
- xvi. Recreational travel or planned events such as weddings

4.3 Application Process for Special Consideration

- a) An application for special consideration must be submitted in writing to ACSEP National Office (NationalOffice@acsep.org.au).
 - i. If the application is in relation to examinations, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Examination and Assessment Committee.
 - ii. If the application is in relation to training assessment activities, it should be addressed to the Chair of the Training Committee.
- b) Relevant supporting documentation for the type of special consideration as specified in Table 1 must be submitted with all applications for special consideration. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide all required documentation to support the application as detailed in



this policy. Applicants in all circumstances may be required to provide further information or documentation as requested by ACSEP.

- c) An application for special consideration cannot be made on behalf of an applicant.
- d) An application for special consideration must be received within five days of completing the examination or assessment. The exception to this is the Clinical Fellowship Examination where an application for special consideration must be received within 24 hours of completing the examination.
- e) Applications made outside the required timeframe (late applications) or delays with providing the supporting documentation may still be submitted and may be considered at the discretion of the CEO.
- f) Late applications must include an outline of the reason(s) why the application was not submitted by the required date, as well as all other documentation and information stipulated in this policy, any other relevant regulations/policies.
- g) To the extent it is possible, ACSEP will strive to maintain the anonymity of applicants who apply for special consideration. Where necessary, the Chair of the Committee considering the application may inform other members of that body of details of the circumstances relating to the application to enable a decision to be made in relation to the application.

4.4 Special Consideration for Alternative Arrangements for Examinations/Assessments

- a) An applicant can apply for special consideration to complete an examination or assessment under alternative arrangements.
- b) The types of special consideration detailed in Table 1 are also considered grounds for alternative arrangements for examinations/assessments.
- c) Individuals who wish to apply for alternative arrangements must submit a written request to ACSEP National Office (nationaloffice@acsep.org.au) at least three (3) months before the date of a scheduled examination/assessment.
- d) The application must clearly outline the type and date of the examination/assessment for which alternative arrangements are sought and include relevant supporting documentation as detailed in Table 1.
- e) This application will thereafter be considered as per section 4.5 below.



4.5 Assessment of Applications for Special Consideration

- a) An application submitted for special consideration will be assessed by the Examination and Assessment Committee if related to an examination and the Training Committee if related to a training assessment.
- b) In deciding on the result of an application for special consideration, factors such as the following will be considered:
 - i. The extent to which the circumstances cited in the application are exceptional in that they could reasonably be preventing the individual from meeting the requirement(s) in question, or as having adversely impacted on their performance in the assessment
 - ii. The extent to which the circumstances cited are considered to have been foreseeable and/or avoidable by the individual
 - iii. The degree to which the exceptional circumstances claimed in the application are supported by the documentation provided
 - iv. Previous ACSEP decisions citing similar grounds that set precedent.
- a) For special consideration in relation to an ACSEP examination, the Examination and Assessment Committee may also take into consideration:
 - i. Past performance of the applicant in an ACSEP examination
 - ii. Performance by the applicant in other sections of the examination (where relevant).
 - iii. Proximity of the applicant's results to the examination cut score (pass mark).
- b) Following their assessment, the Examination and Assessment Committee will provide a recommendation to the CEO who will make the final decision on the outcome of the application.
- c) For special consideration in relation to an ACSEP assessment, the Training Committee may also take into consideration:
 - i. Performance of the applicant through the Training Program including Training Program progress and meeting of Training Program requirements
 - ii. Past performance of the applicant in an ACSEP assessment
- d) Following their assessment, the Training Committee will provide a recommendation to the CEO who will make the final decision on the outcome of the application.



4.6 Outcomes of an Application for Special Consideration

- a) The outcome of an application as decided by the CEO will be that special consideration is granted, or that special consideration is not granted.
- b) An applicant will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application.
- c) Where special consideration is granted, the applicant will not be excused from meeting a requirement, a prerequisite, a standard for performance or qualification of which has been objectively set by ACSEP.
- d) Where an examination comprises more than one component, failure to complete all examination components will preclude the applicant's ability to pass, regardless of the outcome of an application for special consideration.
- e) The outcome for a technical or procedural issue encountered during an examination will be resolution during examination/assessment where possible and rescheduling of examination if circumstances dictate.
- f) Applicants may be required to pay an additional fee to cover the costs associated with alternative arrangements for an examination or assessment. A cost estimate will be provided as appropriate.

4.7 Review, Reconsideration and Appeals

Any applicant who is not satisfied with an outcome for special consideration in relation to an examination or training assessment should refer to *P019 - Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*.

5. Records Management

Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in a recognised ACSEP record keeping system in accordance with *P004 - Privacy Policy* and *P012 - ACSEP Records Management Policy* and associated procedures.

6. Key Documents

- Current ASCEP Training Manual
- *P002 - Grievance Policy and Procedure*
- *P004 - Privacy Policy*



AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE PHYSICIANS

- *P012 - Records Management Policy*
- *P015 - Code of Ethics and Professional Behaviour Policy*
- *P019 - Reconsideration, Review and Appeals Policy*
- *P020 – Flexible Training, Withdrawal and Termination Policy*

7. Feedback

ACSEP staff or membership may provide feedback about this document by emailing ACSEP via nationaloffice@acsep.org.au

8. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	ACSEP Education Committee
Advisor or Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	ACSEP CEO, ACSEP Examination and Assessment Committee, ACSEP Training Committee
Policy Administrator	ACSEP Policy Officer
Next Review Date	May 2027
Notes	<p>V3 – May 2025</p> <p>Reviewed by Executive Manager – Training, Policy Officer, Examination and Assessment Committee, Training Committee</p> <p>V2 - 01/07/2018</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Redrafted by Programs and Systems Administrator</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Reviewed by ACSEP CEO & Operations Manager</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Ratified by Board Executive</p> <p>V1 - 05/04/2018</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Developed and drafted by ACSEP CEO</p>