

Title: Request for 'Special Action' Procedure
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## 4P: Request for 'Special Action' Procedure

*This procedure is relevant to students who need support for personal circumstances but are not eligible to claim under the criteria outlined in the University's extenuating circumstances policy and where suspension of studies may not be appropriate*

1. If you are experiencing any problems, not covered by the extenuating circumstances policy, that impact on your ability to study or undertake assessments that you wish the University to take into account, please seek advice at the Student Hub who can refer you appropriately.
2. The University has a number of ways it can help you, with both short and long term issues, but please note the University will not normally take retrospective action. Telling us about your problems at the end of the year is too late for us to help you.
3. One way the University may be able to help you is by taking 'Special Action'. This is where your personal circumstances are reviewed and the University determines whether it can help you.
4. The following are typical circumstances where the University may be able to help you.

### Long term absence

5. If you are absent from studying for more than 20 working days the University will normally advise that you suspend your studies and start again the following academic year at the stage that you suspended.
6. Exceptionally, where your period of absence has not impacted substantially on your ability to make good the missed learning and assessments(s) you may request that the University reviews your case and considers taking 'Special Action'. You will need to provide clear and independent evidence of the reason(s) for your absence. Acceptable circumstances include:
  - i. Illness extending beyond the period covered by extenuating circumstances;
  - ii. Sudden illness of a dependant;
  - iii. Personal problems; and
  - iv. Work commitments (part-time sponsored students only).
7. The University will consider each application on its merits, but in order for you to make good the missed learning:
  - i. The University must be in a position to provide additional support and reassessment opportunities; and
  - ii. All assessments must be completed by the next scheduled Unit Assessment Board deadline.

This is often not the case and the decision as to whether to take Special Action is entirely at the University's discretion.

### **Other circumstances**

8. Occasionally there are other circumstances where events may impact on your ability to complete your assessments on time which fall outside extenuating circumstances or extended absence and where immediate action is required. These types of situation include:
  - i. Linked assessments: where you are ill for one of a series of linked assessments which impact on your ability to complete later assessments;
  - ii. Complications in submission of a piece of group work where evidenced circumstances have made it impossible for the group to complete the assignment/presentation/ performance on time;
  - iii. Partial absence due to illness or personal issues that mean that you are not in full time attendance; and
  - iv. Illness during a placement.

### **Invalid circumstances**

9. The University has a number of mechanisms for helping students. Where you are eligible for support under these policies you will not be eligible for consideration under the Special Action procedure. For example:
  - i. For short term circumstances e.g. illness that impacts for a period of less than 20 working days: Extenuating circumstances (see extenuating circumstances policy and procedure)
  - ii. For a permanent or long term illness or disability; and
  - iii. Where actions (or inaction) on the part of the University have impacted on you and your cohort's ability to prepare, complete or take an assessment. In these circumstances the University will make alternative arrangements for you and your peers.

### **What is the process??**

10. Where Special Action is a viable option for your circumstances a Student Achievement Officer (SAO) will guide you through the process and help you complete the Special Action Application form. This is a demanding form and you will need to be able to supply the requested evidence. Please be prepared.
11. Your form, evidence and SAO endorsement will be forwarded to the appropriate Programme Group Leader who will review your application in consultation with your course team and appropriate members of the School Management Team to determine:
  - i. whether there are sufficient grounds for the University to take Special Action;
  - ii. whether the School has the resources to support any missed learning and assessment; and
  - iii. whether, given the time scales, it is practical to take Special Action.
12. Where it is determined that the University can help, a Special Action plan will be developed specifying what steps the University will take. This will include details of the additional support to be provided and revised assessment dates where appropriate.
13. Your application and supporting evidence will be reviewed and authorised on behalf of the University by the Academic Registrar or nominee.

### **If your application is successful**

14. You will be notified by the SAO with the details of your Special Action plan. You have to decide whether to accept or decline the offer. It is not negotiable and if you accept it, the plan becomes your learning and assessment plan and cannot be used as a basis of appeal at a later date (unless the University fails to deliver on its commitments).
15. Before agreeing to the plan you are strongly encouraged to talk it through with your tutors and/or the SAO.
16. You will be given 5 working days to accept or reject the plan.
17. If you reject the plan the Special Action process ends and no further consideration of your case will be undertaken by the University. You may still be eligible for support under other University policies and you are strongly encouraged to seek advice at the Student Hub.

### **If your application is unsuccessful**

18. Where the University determines it is not in a position to take Special Action you will be notified in writing, with the reasons.
19. There is no appeal against this decision as taking Special Action is a discretionary decision on part of the University.
20. If your application is rejected you may still be eligible for support under other University policies and you are strongly encouraged to seek advice at the Student Hub.