

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the principles and requirements for granting Special Consideration.

For the purposes of this policy all candidates and registrars will be referred to as applicants. Special consideration is the process that ensures applicants are not disadvantaged in their:

- ability to progress in their credential pathway or program,
- preparation for or completion of their required assessments including examinations
- circumstances beyond their control and objectively likely to have an adverse impact on their performance.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to:

- a. All candidates and registrars applying for and or undertaking the Australian College of Physiotherapists Career Pathway Programs, Titling, Research and Specialisation, regardless of membership status and
- b. APA staff

2.2 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the relevant information handbooks, related policies and training manuals.

3. Grounds for Special Consideration application

Applicants may apply for special consideration on the grounds that their ability to progress, prepare or complete was or will be adversely affected by circumstances beyond their control for the following reason categories:

3.1 Medical Condition*

Applications on the grounds of a medical condition must document how the applicant's medical condition significantly affected their ability to prepare for their exam or perform to the best of their ability.

Required information to be provided:

- a. A current medical certificate completed by a registered medical and/or health practitioner
- b. The medical condition and circumstances (permanent, longstanding impairment or temporary)
- c. Impact of medical condition on how the preparation or performance was affected by the medical condition
- d. Dates of consultation with registered practitioner, including information articulating the condition, severity, and the dates that the applicant has been or will be affected

3.2 Personal hardship*

Applications on the grounds of personal hardship must document how the applicant's hardship significantly affected their ability to prepare for or perform to the best of their ability.

- a. Divorce
- b. Death in the family
- c. Ill relative requiring the applicant's care
- d. Unpredicted or sudden housing relocation
- e. Redundancy
- f. Financial/business hardship
- g. Attending a court case during scheduled assessments
- h. Unforeseen circumstances impacting training and assessment requirement

3.3 Examination/Assessment Incident

Applications on the grounds of an exam incident must relate to an incident that occurred during the applicant's exam or assessment. The applicant must document how the incident was **beyond their control** and significantly affected their exam performance.

Information required to be submitted with the special consideration application form:

- a. A statement describing an exam day incident that impacted and or compromised your performance*
- b. How the incident impacted their performance in the lead up to and or on the day
- c. When the incident occurred, including how long it lasted
- d. Whether the incident discussed with ACP Staff
- e. The actions taken by the examiner/assessor/ACP staff to support the applicant

- * Specific supporting documentation is required for applications on the grounds of medical condition or personal hardship.

4. Submission and acceptance of an Application for Special Consideration

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application meets the requirements of the special consideration policy and all criteria and requirements on the application form have been met. Special consideration applications must be submitted using the APA Special Consideration Application form, be supported by current documentation and adhere to submission timeframes.

All applications will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Applications will be acknowledged in writing via email. Applications without sufficient supporting documentation will not be considered and the applicant will be notified in writing.

In cases that we believe the application to be disingenuous or is not within the scope of this policy, we are within our rights to deny the application request. When reviewing a request, the following will be considered:

- The scope of the circumstances presented within the application must be considered extenuating and be objectively seen as adversely impacting on the applicant's ability to meet the requirement
- The degree to which the circumstances are avoidable and/or predictable by the applicant
- The degree to which the circumstances are supported by evidence accompanying the application

5. Potential Outcomes of a Special Consideration application

- Examination attempts not counted
- Additional attempts at examination or other requirements
- Extension of time to training requirements
- Part time training
- Deferment and or period of absence from training

Applying for special consideration in the context of an examination does not change how the applicant's exam will be marked. The final score will reflect the applicant's performance across the entire exam i.e. a Fail and/or Not Met result being upgraded to a Pass and/or Met.

In cases where special consideration is accepted and a re-attempt approved, the original attempt will be omitted.

In the event where an examination attempt has been deemed as not counted (i.e. an approved omission), it does not allow an applicant to apply for a refund. In circumstances where the error and or mistake was made by the APA in the process of undertaking the assessment, a refund may be applied following review of the incident.

The candidate will be required to pay the examination/assessment fee for the re-attempt.

Prior history of applications may be considered where relevant.

6. Submitting an Application

- An application must be submitted immediately after the applicant becomes aware of the extenuating circumstances
- **For examinations/assessments selection and post portfolio interviews:** an application must be submitted within 72 hours after sitting the examination or interview. Applications received after 72 hours will not be accepted
- **For all assessment requirements:** an application must be submitted prior to the due date
- An application will not be accepted following publication of examination/assessment results
- Access the application form for [Special Consideration STP](#) or [Special Consideration Titling Credential](#)
- Applications must be submitted to acp@australian.physio

7. Review of an Application for Special Consideration

- Receipt of email applications will be acknowledged within three business days
- Upon receipt of an application, ACP staff will determine whether grounds for applying for special consideration have been met against policy criteria
- If the application does not meet policy criteria, the applicant will be informed in writing
- Eligible applications will be forwarded to the relevant ACP Committee Chair to determine the outcome of the application (refer Appendix 1)
- If deliberation is required to reach an outcome, the Chair may defer the decision to a three-person panel nominated from the relevant committee, which will be convened as soon as possible, but no later than ten business days after acceptance of the application

8. Reconsideration, Review and Appeal

Following the outcome of the application for special consideration, the applicant may opt to apply for reconsideration of the decision under the Reconsideration and Review Policy*. In accordance with the Appeals policy*, only once an outcome from the Reconsideration and Review has been determined, can an Appeal be lodged by the applicant.

*Policy in draft and or currently under review

9. Wellbeing Support

Internal and external support is available to an applicant experiencing extenuating circumstances.

Internal support

College staff are available to guide and support the applicant, ensuring confidentiality.

Email: acp@australian.physio Phone: 1300 306 622

External Support

The APA Employee Assistance Program (EAP Assist), is available to all applicants for support and advice through the special consideration process. EAP Assist provides confidential counselling and support with trained counsellors at no cost to the applicant.

To contact the EAP Assist service:

- Call/text: 0407 086 000 (between 9.00am - 5.00pm AEST Monday to Friday)
- Email: support@eapassist.com.au
- [Book a phone consultation](#) using the EAP Assist appointment booking form:
 - Enter the code 0407086000 to access the online booking service
 - In the booking form, enter Australian Physiotherapy Association as your company name
 - Appointment times range from 8.00 am to 7.00 pm AEST

EAP also have a library of articles that cover a range of topics: <http://eapassist.com.au/news/>



10. Related Policies

- Reconsideration and Review Policy (in draft)
- Appeals Policy (for review in line with above policy development)
- Specialist Training Program Registrar Progression Review Policy (in draft)

Policy Version:	Version 5.0
Policy Owner:	ACP
Policy Approved by:	Rob LoPresti, CEO
Review of Policy:	September 2024
Next Review:	September 2025



Definitions

Applicant/Candidate/Registrar	An individual who makes a formal application for an exemption to ACP policies or regulations on grounds of extenuating circumstances. In this context the applicant can be a Titling, Specialisation (STP) or Research pathway candidate or registrar. For the purposes of this policy candidates and registrars will be referred to as applicants.
Extenuating Circumstance	Unforeseen illness, misadventure or accident that an applicant wishes to formally advise the ACP, and which has prevented the applicant from meeting and/or completing a Titling, STP or Research Pathway requirement/assessment/examination.
Assessment	Process of documenting clinical/non-clinical knowledge & skills. These can take the form of: • Pre-requisite courses for Titling applications • Titling Evidence Portfolio • Assessments • Case Studies • Marked Mock Exams (MME) • Written Examinations • Clinical Examinations • Viva Voce • Post-clinical Exam discussions • Various other requirements of the ACP Career Pathway programs
Omission/Omitted	An attempt is exempted based upon circumstances after approval of a special consideration application.
Approving Committee	The Committee is responsible for overseeing and approving the Special Consideration application based on Special Consideration type as outlined in Appendix 1.



Appendix 1

Special Considerations Type	Approving committee
Titling – Evidence Portfolio	Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
Titling – Written Examination	Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
Titling – Clinical Examination	Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
Titling – Academic Applications	Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
Titling – Grandfathering Pathway Applications: CPCL	Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
Specialisation Training Program (STP) - Assessments	Board of Censors
STP Deferment/Part time Training	Board of Censors
STP Examination Deferment (in Training)	Board of Censors
STP Examination Deferment (3 rd year deferred)	Board of Examiners
STP - Clinical Examination	Board of Examiners, Assessment and Credentialing Standing Committee
STP Examination Accommodation	Board of Examiners
STP - Readiness to sit the Exam Assessment	Board of Censors, Fellowship Pathways Standing Committee
Application/Selection STP	ACP Selection Panel
Research/Original Contribution	Fellowship Pathways Standing Committee