Education and Training Policy and Procedure

Special Consideration

Authorising Committee/ Department:	RANZCP Board
Responsible Committee/ Department:	Education Committee
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Contents

1. Policy on Special Consideration
2. Policy Statement
3. Purpose
4. Policy Details and Procedures
4.1 Introduction

1. Policy on Special Consideration

This policy describes the process for special consideration for the examinations and centrally administered summative assessments governed by the RANZCP Fellowship Regulations 2012, including the Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) Examination, Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination, Clinical Competency Portfolio Review (CCPR), Psychotherapy Written Case and Scholarly Project, as well as for Workplace-Based Assessments (WBA).

2. Policy Statement

The RANZCP is obligated to ensure that candidates eligible for Fellowship have achieved the required standards for each aspect of an assessment or examination along with all other training requirements. Candidates may require special consideration for a workplace-based assessment or a centrally administered summative assessment to ensure they are able to perform to the best of their abilities.

Candidates may apply for special consideration in order to ensure they receive equal opportunities for attendance and success.

3. Purpose

This policy defines the process by which candidates may apply for special consideration in relation to circumstances that may adversely affect their ability to successfully complete a RANZCP centrally administered summative assessment, or a workplace-based assessment

This policy does not set out the process for trainees who, due to exceptional circumstances, will not meet the deadlines set out in the Progression through Training Policy (6.1) and related Trainee Progress Trajectory. The process of requesting additional time beyond these examination and assessment deadlines is detailed in the Progression through Training and Failure to Progress Policies (6.1; 19.1).

4. Policy Details and Procedures

4.1 Introduction

Candidates may submit a request for special consideration with regard to a particular centrally administered summative assessment, or a WBA for circumstances that may adversely affect their performance on that centrally administered summative assessment or WBA. Special Consideration application details can be found in point 4.4.

Specific requests for special consideration will be considered on a case-by-case basis and the RANZCP will make its best endeavours to accommodate accepted requests.

Special consideration granted to a candidate is not ongoing and is only applicable to the particular centrally administered summative assessment or WBA attempt for which a request for special consideration has been made.

When considering requests for special consideration, the relevant committee will not grant adjusted marks for any aspect of a centrally administered summative assessment or WBA. If a candidate believes their performance in a centrally administered summative assessment is likely to be seriously affected by illness or other personal circumstances, they should consider withdrawing from the examination attempt or deferring their assessment submission. An application to the Committee for Training (CFT) for consideration of exceptional circumstances regarding the trainee's progress trajectory may be relevant in these cases (more information can be found in the Progression through Training Policy [6.1] and the Failure to Progress Policy [19.1]).

4.2 Core Psychiatry Skills

Psychiatrists in Australia and New Zealand require competence in a number of core skills that are assessed as part of the RANZCP Fellowship Program examinations and assessments. Included in these skills and knowledge are:

- the ability to produce written material in English in a manner that is:
  - generally understood in Australia and New Zealand
  - legible
  - grammatically correct
  - correctly spelled
- the ability to communicate effectively in English with patients, other professionals and the community in Australia and New Zealand
  - The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and Medical Council of New Zealand (MCNZ) each require a minimum standard of proficiency in written and spoken English.
- the ability to develop arguments to support a particular viewpoint and to recognise the importance of, and be able to discuss, the merits of opposing arguments
- the ability to demonstrate awareness of different models of illness and illness behaviour
- the ability to produce clear and clinically appropriate written material with the timeframes ordinarily expected in psychiatric practice, with reasonable adjustments where possible
- the ability to concentrate sufficiently to complete aspects of an examination reflective of usual psychiatric practice in the time allowed
- a sufficient knowledge of general medicine and the appropriate level of skill and ability to:
  - conduct an accurate physical examination
  - adequately deal with emergency situations including undertaking resuscitation
  - demonstrate an appropriate understanding of medical and surgical principles
  - manage medical situations that arise in psychiatric patients with the assistance of other health practitioners
- the knowledge of research principles, ethics, levels of evidence and the ability to recognise the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the research.

4.2.1 Requests Related to Core Skills

Requests for special consideration or reasonable adjustment will be considered on a case-by-case basis, having regard to the candidate's circumstances, supporting evidence, the nature of the assessment, and the competencies being assessed. Adjustments will not be approved where they would compromise the validity, reliability, fairness or integrity of the assessment, or where

they would remove or materially alter an inherent requirement of the examination.

English as a second language, of itself, will generally not be accepted as grounds for special consideration, as effective communication in English is a core requirement of psychiatric training and practice. This does not prevent consideration of disability-related communication, processing, reading, writing or other functional impacts as supported by appropriate evidence.

Requests for extra time will be assessed individually. Extra time may be declined where the timed nature of the assessment is integral to the competency being assessed, including the capacity to think, prioritise, respond and formulate clinical reasoning within time-limited circumstances. Where extra time is not considered reasonable, alternative adjustments may be considered where they preserve the assessment standard and examination integrity.

4.3 Workplace-Based Assessments (WBA)

4.3.1 The College recognises there are occasions where non-submission of a completed Workplace-Based Assessment is beyond the control of a trainee.

4.3.2 As, according to the WBA Policy, there are no mandated time limits or a limit to the number of formative WBA attempts that may be undertaken by a trainee, the trainee should, where possible, make other arrangements to complete the WBA requirements before submitting an application for special consideration.

4.3.3 Where an application for special consideration on the grounds of exceptional circumstances beyond the control of the trainee, relates to non-submission of a completed WBA, the date of the requirement or event shall be the date at which the trainee is notified that a required WBA was not received by the College.

4.3.4 Where the trainee is or becomes aware of any exceptional circumstances that may adversely affect the assessment process, they should apply for special consideration prospectively.

4.4 Criteria for Special Consideration

The relevant committee will only consider requests that could adversely affect a candidate's ability to complete the centrally administered summative assessment or WBA within the standard procedures and timing. Each application for special consideration will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The committees may take into account other relevant information when determining the outcome of a request for special consideration, for example, the granting of special consideration for previous RANZCP centrally administered summative assessments or WBAs or special consideration granted by other organisations for any particular candidate.

The RANZCP cannot specify all circumstances that might lead to the granting of special consideration.

- With regard to examinations previous, applications have been in relation to longstanding medical conditions.
- An example of a request for special consideration for a centrally administered assessment, such as the Psychotherapy Written Case or Scholarly Project, might be a request for a brief extension (within the two-week period before the due date. Refer to SP/PWC extension guidelines) should there be a sudden and significant change in the candidate's personal circumstances shortly before the submission date.
    - Note: Any exceptional circumstances related to the fulfilment of at least 40 sessions of treatment for the Psychotherapy Written Case should be handled in line with the Psychotherapy Written Case Procedure (11.1) rather than through the special consideration process.

4.4.1 Requests on Religious Grounds

In considering requests based on religious grounds, the committees will take into account reasonable workplace expectations and will consider any practical and financial impact on health services and others involved in the examination and on the viability of the examination.

The committees may seek advice from an authority in that religion prior to making a decision.

Applications for special consideration due to religious observance prohibiting participation in an examination at a particular time or on a particular day should be made in writing to the CFE via the RANZCP Head Office. These requests must be received 12 months prior to the date of the examination or (where relevant) as soon as practicable once the examination timetable is released so that alternative arrangements may be considered.

4.4.2 Requests relating to reproductive health, pre- and post-natal care

All reasonable requests for special consideration relating to reproductive health, pre- and post-natal care needs will be reviewed by the CFE with the consideration of multiple aspects that include but are not limited to any practical aspects including the venue limitations.

Applications for special consideration relating to the above should be made in writing prospectively to the CFE no later than 4 weeks prior to the date of the examination or the assessment submission closing date via the RANZCP Head Office (see point 4.5 of this Policy) so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

4.5 Application and Process for Special Consideration

A request for special consideration relating to a centrally administered summative assessment must be addressed to the Chair, Committee for Examinations, at the RANZCP Head Office. It should accompany the application for the particular RANZCP examination or be submitted prior to the relevant assessment submission close date.

A request for special consideration relating to a WBA should be addressed to the Chair, Committee for Training, at the RANZCP Head Office.

A new application for special consideration must be submitted for each further attempt or each centrally administered summative assessment or WBA. However, the supporting documentation will only be required to be resubmitted if there is a change in circumstances (see point 4.4.1).

4.5.1 Supporting Documentation

Requests for special consideration should state the specific special arrangements requested, for example, access to food and/or fluids in the examination room or the use of special equipment.

Any special consideration request related to Written examinations (MCQ and MEQ) should include supporting documents from treating health or other professionals. This must include the RANZCP Writtens Examinations Special Consideration Request Form and Health Professional Report, and any other relevant documentation such as statutory declarations that describe the practical impact of the limitation or circumstance in the specific examination setting. For continuing conditions diagnosed more than 5 years prior to the date of submission of the request for special consideration, updated reports based on reviews or consultations within the five years prior to the date of submission of the application for special consideration are required. Supporting documentation will be verified and will generally not be accepted where it is completed or signed by a member of the candidate's family.

Requests must include a letter of support from the candidate's current principal supervisor or Director of Training (DOT).

For assessments other than the Written Examinations (MCQ and MEQ), special consideration requests must include:

- formal request to the Chair, Committee for Examinations
- supporting documentation from treating health professionals
- a letter of support from your Director of Training or supervisor.

4.5.2 Further Information

The committees may require further information from the applicant. On request, candidates must submit such supporting and/or clarifying information and documentation as the committee requires to reasonably consider the application. Such information may include:

- for continuing conditions diagnosed more than five years ago, updated reports or letters confirming consultation with the treating health professional within the last five years are required.
- documentary evidence of any related previous granting of special consideration for the candidate (including in secondary or tertiary education)
- additional detail stating the reasoning for the special consideration request for the particular examination or assessment.

The committee may approach the candidate's DOT, principal supervisor or relevant health practitioner for further comments on the application. The committee may also seek permission from the candidate to contact and request information from institutions or organisations where previous applications for special consideration have been granted.

4.5.3 Late Requests

Requests for special consideration related to medical conditions, compassionate grounds or significant changes in personal circumstances that occur after the application closing date for the relevant examination must be submitted as soon as possible after they arise. The granting of such requests can have a significant impact on examination venue resources and processes; therefore, late applications must provide the reason for submitting the request after the examination application close date as well as the nature of the issue that has arisen. Requests for special consideration received after application closing date may not be accommodated.

Requests for special consideration for a centrally administered summative assessment must be received at the RANZCP Head Office no later than 3 weeks prior to the date of the examination or the assessment submission closing date.

4.6 Outcome and Implementation

The candidate will receive written notification of the outcome of their request for special consideration, which will specify any special arrangements where the request has been granted.

The committees will liaise with the appropriate examination coordinators and assessment subcommittees as required with regard to any special arrangements for candidates granted special consideration.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality

The RANZCP and its committees must comply fully with the requirements of Australian and New Zealand privacy legislation, as well as the RANZCP Privacy Policy, with regard to the collection and distribution of information pertaining to special consideration. Discussions relating to requests for special consideration must be documented and maintained in accordance with the RANZCP Privacy Policy.

6. Review of Decisions

Trainees and SIMGs are able to have the decision outcomes reviewed or appealed, and they are referred to the RANZCP Appeals and complaints webpage that provides guidance to candidates who may not be satisfied with the outcome of a decision relating to training or assessment, in accordance with the RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure.

7. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Education Committee shall oversee the implementation, monitoring and reviewing of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as necessary and updated as required.

8. Associated Documents

8.1 Regulation: 18.1 Written Examinations Regulation

8.2 Policies & Procedures:

18.1A Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) Examination Policy and Procedure

18.1B MEQ Examination Policy and Procedure

6.1 Progression through Training Policy

19.1 Failure to Progress Policy and Procedure

RANZCP Privacy Policy

RANZCP Review, Reconsideration and Appeal Policy and Procedure

8.3 Forms: RANZCP Writtens Examinations Special Consideration Request Form and Health Professional Report – MCQ and MEQ

Psychotherapy Written Case Submission Form

Scholarly Project Submission Form

RANZCP Writtens Examinations Special Consideration Request Form and Health Professional Report

Education and Training Guidelines Psychotherapy Written Case Examination Extensions

Education and Training Guidelines Scholarly Project Examination Extensions

8.4 Other: Cancellation and Refund Schedule

REVISION RECORD

Document Owner:		Education and Training Department	
Contact:		Senior Manager, Assessments and SIMG	
Date	**Version**	**Approver**	**Description**
6/11/2026	V1.7	Education Committee	Minor updates: -4.2 Amended wording to clarify the expected standard; 4.4 amended to specify SP/PWC special consideration guidelines 4.2.1 and 4.5.1– amended to reflect updated processes; - 4.5.2 – added relevant health practitioner that can be contacted by the Committee; - minor editing; 8.3. updated to include the new forms and relevant SP/PWC Guidelines to reflect the current process.
22/06/2026	v1.6	Executive Operations Manager	Minor admin update: -replaced reference to CCA-MPR as no longer used, with CCPR, in Section1-Policy.
20/06/2025	v.1.5	EC Chair	Minor: addition of clause 4.4.2, update to section 6 to refer to RANZCP Appeals and complaints webpage, and updated policies and procedures list. Added 4.3 – WBA; - added 4.4.2-requests for reproductive health; - removed CEQ examination;- renamed 4 Policy details and procedures; - renamed doc policy and procedure as per College doc structure.
05/03/21	v.1.4	RANZCP Board	Amendments of the policy as a result of decoupling the previous Essay-style Examination into two independent examinations: Modified Essay Questions (MEQ) Examination and Critical Essay Questions (CEQ) Examination. (EC approved 23/04/2021)
12/05/2020	v.1.3	Education Committee	Minor Amendments, approved by EC with changes 21/03/2020
12/04/19	v.1.2	Education Committee	Amendment to 4.3, removal of example of longstanding medical conditions e.g. diabetes mellitus and 4.4.3, requests made for special consideration after application date may not be accommodated and requests received at RANZCP no later than 3 weeks prior to the date of the examination or assessment submission closing date. Previously reviewed by the CFE 20/03/19, approved by EC with changes 12/04/19.
15/05/18	v.1.1		Removal of Definitions & Abbreviations
27/10/13	v.1.0	RANZCP Board	First version approved by RANZCP Board B2013/6 R10.
2029		**NEXT REVIEW**	