

Student Academic Consideration Policy

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Scope

The purpose of the Student Academic Consideration Policy is to enable student requests for academic consideration for assessable components of a subject to be evaluated in a fair, reasonable, timely and consistent manner throughout the Nan Tien Institute (NTI). This policy applies to all students studying at NTI.

Definitions

Academic Consideration	Academic consideration is intended to help minimise the impact of serious or extenuating circumstances beyond a student’s control, which significantly impair a student’s ability to complete an assessment task on or by the due date as stipulated in the <i>Subject Learning & Assessment Guide</i> ; or which affect academic progress in a subject relevant to their course of study. Academic consideration may be granted on the basis of medical grounds, compassionate grounds and/or extenuating circumstances.
Assessment	Assessable work is that which a student is required to complete to provide a basis for an official record of achievement or certification of competence in a subject. This may include summative and/or formative forms of assessment. Examples of assessments include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examination, • test, • take-home examination, • quiz,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflection, • essay, • laboratory report, • thesis, • demonstration, • performance, • tutorial presentation, • multimedia presentation, • contemplative practice, • practicum, • clinical placement, and • work experience.
Course	A program of study consisting of a combination of subjects and other requirements, whether leading to a specific higher education award or not.
Deferred	Deferred refers to postponing the due date of an assessable item and may refer to an in-session test or a final exam.
Non-Award Student	A student enrolled in subject/s that do not lead to a higher education award at NTI.
Registered Medical Practitioner	A medically qualified person registered with the <i>Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA)</i> as a medical practitioner to practice in Australia.
Registered Psychologist	A qualified person registered with the <i>Australian Health Practitioner Registration Agency (AHPRA)</i> as a psychologist to practice in Australia.
Student	A person registered for a course or enrolled in subject/s with the NTI.
Subject Coordinator	An academic staff member with nominated responsibility for a particular subject.
Subject Learning & Assessment Guide	The document governing content, delivery and assessment of material for a subject.

Policy Statement

1. The principles guiding this policy are:

- 1.1 Students are responsible for making reasonable efforts to minimise the impacts of medical, compassionate, and/or extenuating circumstances on their academic performance;
- 1.2 Students are expected to liaise with their subject coordinator when they become aware of a medical, compassionate, and/or extenuating circumstance which may affect their academic performance;
- 1.3 It is not possible for academic consideration to compensate for every consequence of illness, injury, other serious cause, or extenuating circumstance affecting a student's academic progress. However, academic consideration, where appropriate, may help to minimise the impact of such circumstances without compromising the learning outcomes of the subject. To pass subjects, students must demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes specified in the Subject Outline, regardless of whether academic consideration has been granted;
- 1.4 Appropriate learning and other support should be offered to students identified as at risk of not achieving satisfactory academic performance;
- 1.5 Underlying the requirements, definitions and procedures of this policy are the principles of equity,

- consistency, transparency and natural justice; and
- 1.6 Academic consideration is a process intended to help minimise the impact of serious or extenuating circumstances beyond a student's control which significantly impair a student's ability to complete an assessment task on or by the due date as stipulated in the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide or to progress academically in a subject relevant to their course of study. Academic consideration may be granted on the basis of medical grounds, compassionate grounds and/or extenuating circumstances.

Systems and Procedures

2. Circumstances where students may be eligible to apply for academic consideration

2.1 Academic consideration will only be considered for illness, injury, other serious cause, or extenuating circumstances which:

- 2.1.1 Significantly impact a student's ability to meet the requirements of a subject's teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks as defined in the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide;
- 2.1.2 Are beyond the student's control, not due to their action or inaction, and which could not have been reasonably foreseen or avoided; and
- 2.1.3 Are supported by documentary evidence as outlined in **Section 4** of this policy.
- 2.2 **Illness, injury, other serious cause, or extenuating circumstances may include:**
- 2.2.1 Medical conditions or events including illness or injury, hospitalisations, treatment programs, exacerbation of existing medical condition or disability;
- 2.2.2 Compassionate grounds such as loss or bereavement, family relationship breakdown, sudden loss of income, significant disruption to domestic arrangements, or being victim of a crime; and
- 2.2.3 Extenuating circumstances such as substantial unplanned carer's responsibilities, legal commitments, simultaneous in-session tests, military service, one-off unusual work commitments, accidents or disasters, participation in sporting events at state, national or international level with an official sporting body, religious or cultural obligations and events.
- 2.3 **Non eligible circumstances**

Academic consideration will not be granted for common occurrences which interfere with daily life. These non-eligible, common occurrences include, but are not limited to:

- a) usual or routine work commitments;
 - b) issues with transport to campus;
 - c) computer failures, where a student has failed to back up their work;
 - d) multiple exams within a time period which do not clash with each other;
 - e) multiple assessment tasks due in a period;
 - f) usual or routine family commitments;
 - g) usual recreational activities;
 - h) lack of knowledge of requirements of academic work or due dates; and
 - i) anticipated changes of address.
- 2.4 **Types of consideration which may be requested**
- 2.4.1 Extension of time to submit an assessment task beyond the due date specified in the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide.
- 2.4.2 Permission to undertake a deferred assessment task or in-session test beyond the date specified in the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide. The Subject Coordinator will determine the nature, date, time and venue of an approved deferred in-session

assessment task or in-session test.

- 2.4.3 Permission to undertake a deferred end-of-session exam. Students intending to graduate should be aware that an approved deferred end-of-session exam will impact their eligibility to graduate in that session, as results may not be released in time for graduation cut off dates.
- 2.4.4 Consideration in marking an assessable item may be requested where a student's circumstances affected their preparation for, or performance in an assessable item.
- 2.4.5 Revision of the requirement for compulsory attendance or participation, where the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide clearly states that attendance or participation has an effect on a subject's final grade.

3. Timeframes for applying and providing documentary evidence

- 3.1 Students cannot apply for academic consideration for an exam or assessment task after completing and submitting that exam or assessment task. Where a student has commenced an exam and had to leave before completion due to illness, they may still apply for academic consideration in line with all conditions outlined in this policy.
- 3.2 The time limit beyond which an academic consideration will not be granted is three (3) months after the end of a subject.
- 3.3 Students requesting extensions of time to submit an assessment task, deferred exam, alternative form of assessment, or revision of a compulsory attendance requirement, must apply before, or on the due date, and provide documentary evidence within three (3) working days of the assessable item's due date for their request to be considered.
- 3.4 The Subject Coordinator may approve an exemption of the timeframes specified in **Section 3** of this policy, provided a student's documentary evidence shows that exceptional circumstances prevented the student from adhering to the timeframe/s. Examples of exceptional circumstances justifying an exemption may include, but are not limited to, an accidental injury or sudden illness requiring the student's immediate hospitalisation without access to a computer.
- 3.5 Applications for academic consideration are submitted electronically via the Student Portal.
- 3.6 Students should note that the fact of submitting an application does not automatically mean that academic consideration will be granted.

4. Documentary evidence

- 4.1 All applications for academic consideration must be supported by documentary evidence as set out in **Section 4** of this policy. Applications without documentary evidence which complies with the criteria set out in this policy will not be forwarded to the Subject Coordinator (or relevant person authorised to approve an academic consideration) for consideration, even if the circumstances stated by the student comply with the eligibility criteria set out in **Section 2** of this policy.
 - 4.1.1 Documentary evidence must be attached to the electronic academic consideration application.
 - 4.1.2 Documentary evidence must be written in English or be a certified translation.
- 4.2 **Documentary evidence for medical grounds**
 - 4.2.1 To be considered for academic consideration for medical grounds, including physical and/or psychological illness, a student must provide a medical certificate or official letter from a registered medical practitioner or a registered psychologist as documentary evidence which includes the following information:
 - a) The name of the student which matches the name on their NTI record;
 - b) The date the certificate was written and signed;
 - c) The start and end date for which the student's medical circumstances are covered by the document, and which match the student's request for academic

- consideration; and
- d) Any additional information which may assist the student in obtaining academic consideration.
- 4.2.2 Statutory declarations will not be accepted as documentary evidence for medical grounds.
- 4.3 **Documentary evidence for non-medical grounds**
- 4.3.1 To be considered for academic consideration for non-medical grounds, a student must provide at least one of the following documents:
- A death certificate or death notice, where the circumstances are related to bereavement;
 - A Police report or event number, where the student has been a victim of a crime;
 - A letter from an employer on an official company letterhead, where the circumstances are employment-related;
 - A jury notice letter from a relevant authority, where the circumstances are related to jury duty;
 - A letter from the armed forces on official letterhead, where the circumstances are related to reasonable adjustments for a Reserve member who is rendering defence service;
 - A selection confirmation on the letterhead of the state, national or international sporting body, where the circumstances relate to sporting commitments;
 - A letter from a minister of religion (or the like) on an official letterhead, where the circumstances relate to unexpected religious obligations;
 - A letter from an official cultural authority on an official letterhead, where the circumstances relate to out of the ordinary cultural obligations.
- 4.3.2 Where the nature of the circumstances and how they affected the student are not obvious in the document, a *Statutory Declaration* for academic consideration may be included to establish further details.
- 4.3.3 Documentary evidence for non-medical grounds must indicate:
- The name of the student which matches the name on their NTI record;
 - The date the document was written and signed;
 - The start and end date for which the student's circumstances are covered by the document, and which match the student's request for academic consideration;
 - How the circumstances have affected the student's ability to study; and
 - The relationship of the student where the document refers to family member/s.
- 4.4 **Statutory Declarations and secondary evidence for non-medical grounds**
- 4.4.1 Where it is not reasonable for a student to provide documentary evidence (for non-medical grounds) as outlined in **Section 4.3** of this policy, a student may be permitted to provide a statutory declaration to accompany secondary forms of evidence.
- 4.4.2 Secondary forms of evidence refer to any evidence not outlined in **Section 4.3** and may include flight tickets, photographs, receipts or any other form of document which supports a student's eligibility for academic consideration.
- 4.4.3 A statutory declaration will not be accepted as documentary evidence without some form of secondary evidence.
- 4.4.4 A statutory declaration will not be accepted as documentary evidence for medical grounds, regardless of whether it is accompanied by secondary evidence.
- 4.5 **Verification of documentary evidence**
- 4.5.1 Once submitted, documentary evidence will be verified by Student Services staff.
- 4.5.2 In submitting documentary evidence for verification, students consent to NTI contacting the issuer of the document/s to confirm their legitimacy. Students consent to the release of information to relevant third parties for the purpose of verifying document legitimacy.
- 4.5.3 From the date of verification of documentary evidence, students are required to retain the

document/s for twelve (12) months and may be requested to provide them for further inspection. A Subject Coordinator, Head of Program or the Dean is entitled to inspect the original documentary evidence prior to making a decision and may request to sight it before a decision is made in regards to the academic consideration application. Failure to provide the original documentary evidence on request may result in an application being denied.

4.5.4 The submission of fraudulent documentation will be regarded as serious misconduct and will be managed in accordance with the *Student Misconduct Policy*.

5. Response times to applications

- 5.1 Student Services staff will assess the eligibility of all applications for academic consideration in accordance with the principles of this policy and forward all eligible applications to the Subject Coordinator, the Head of Program or the Dean, depending on the type and time length of academic consideration sought by the student.
- 5.2 The outcome of the application will be communicated to students via an email from Student Services within ten (10) working days of the application.
- 5.3 Students will be informed in writing of any possible delays in assessing their applications for academic consideration and will not be penalised for any such delays.

6. Outcomes of academic consideration

- 6.1 The outcome of an application for academic consideration is determined by one of the following: Subject Coordinator, Head of Program or Dean.
 - 6.1.1 In deciding whether or not to grant a request for academic consideration, and in deciding what form of academic consideration, if any, may be appropriate, regard is given to:
 - a) whether the academic consideration sought would compromise the learning outcomes of the subject;
 - b) whether the circumstance significantly impacts the student's ability to meet the requirements of a subject's teaching/learning and/or assessment tasks as defined in the Subject Learning & Assessment Guide;
 - c) whether the circumstances were beyond the student's control, not due to their action or inaction, and could not have been reasonably foreseen or avoided;
 - d) whether the student complied with timeframes for submission of their application and documentary evidence, or had extenuating circumstances for not doing so;
 - e) the student's academic progress so far in the session;
 - f) whether the student's circumstances are sufficiently supported by documentary evidence.
- 6.2 Students who submit three (3) or more applications for academic consideration within a semester will be requested by Student Services to contact the Head of Program to discuss their academic progress and performance.
- 6.3 Where academic consideration extends beyond the return of marked work to students, a supplementary assessment item may be required.
- 6.4 **Applications denied**

Denied applications shall include the reason/s why the application has been denied and the name of the academic staff member who has made the decision. A denied application is not an indication that NTI staff do not believe the students' circumstances are genuine, but that their application and/or documentary evidence do not meet the criteria outlined in this policy.

6.5 Requests for additional evidence and/or information

A student may be asked to provide additional evidence and/or information if the assessor of the application believes the application to be incomplete, as determined by the criteria of this policy. In these instances, the assessor will provide the student with a deadline for providing this information. If the additional evidence and/or information is not received by the deadline, application/s will be declined. Where additional evidence and/or information is provided by the deadline, the application will be assessed in line with the criteria outlined in this policy.

6.6 Referral to Dean

In certain cases, a Subject Coordinator may, at their discretion, choose to direct an application for academic consideration to the Head of Program. The Head of Program may also re-direct this application to the Dean for a decision.

6.7 Approved applications

6.7.1 Approved applications shall include details of the approval, what type of consideration has been granted, any dates of deferrals or extensions, and the name of the academic staff member who has made the decision.

6.7.2 While students may request a particular type of consideration during their application, assessors may determine that an alternative form of consideration is more appropriate.

7. Requests for further consideration

7.1 Where a student has been approved to sit a deferred or supplementary end-of-session exam and is subsequently unable to attend on the scheduled day, a second deferred or supplementary exam may be approved by the relevant Head of Program on rare occasions, provided the request meets all other eligibility criteria outlined in this policy. A third deferred end-of-session exam will not be considered.

7.2 For further requests for consideration types other than a deferred end-of-session exam, if a request still meets all other eligibility criteria outlined in this policy, an academic assessor may in rare circumstances approve further consideration in the form of one of the following:

- a) additional time to submit an assessment task beyond the date of the original approval; or
- b) permission to undertake a deferred in-session exam on a later date to the original approval; or
- c) an alternative form of an assessment task, other than what is specified in the subject outline or original approval.

7.3 Requests for further consideration are bound by all other conditions outlined in this policy.

7.4 Where requests for further consideration are not considered or approved, the student may be offered the opportunity to discuss alternative appropriate options with the Head of Program or may be awarded a zero mark for the assessment item in question.

8. Appeal against a decision on academic consideration

If the student believes that the outcome of their application is not in line with the rules of this policy, they may appeal the outcome of their application.

8.1 Informal resolution procedure

Where a student believes their request for academic consideration was not managed in accordance with the principles of this policy, the student should in the first instance approach the staff member who made a decision on their application for academic consideration, and do so as soon as possible after receiving the outcome of their application for academic consideration.

It is the normal expectation that such a review would resolve most appeals against academic consideration decisions.

8.2 Formal appeals procedure

8.2.1 Head of Program

If the student remains dissatisfied with the discussion with the person who determined the outcome of their academic consideration application, or if the student is uncomfortable approaching the person who determined the outcome of their academic consideration application, the student may make a formal appeal in writing to the Head of Program.

- All appeals against academic consideration decisions must be made in writing and must be made individually. Group appeals will not be accepted.
- Students are required to clearly identify the outcome of the academic consideration application they are appealing against and explain how that outcome breached the principles of this policy.
- Appeals against academic consideration decisions must be lodged within twenty (20) working days of receipt of that decision. The Dean of Studies may extend the deadline for lodging an appeal in exceptional circumstances.
- The Head of Program will determine whether the appeal is denied or upheld, and notify the student of the appeal outcome within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.
- If the appeal cannot be resolved within the specified timeframe, the Head of Program will inform the student and give the student an alternative timeframe.
- Where the Head of Program has made the original decision, a Head from another program will substitute in the appeal procedure.

8.2.2 Dean of Studies

If the student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal as determined by the Head of Program or if the Head of Program was the person who has made the original decision, the student may escalate the appeal in writing to the Dean of Studies.

- Students are required to clearly state how their request for academic consideration wasn't managed in accordance with the principles of this policy.
- Appeals to the Dean of Studies must be lodged within twenty (20) working days of receipt of the appeal outcome by the Head of Program.
- The Dean of Studies will determine whether the appeal is denied or upheld, and notify the student of the appeal outcome within ten (10) working days of receipt of the appeal.
- If the appeal cannot be resolved within the specified timeframe, the Dean of Studies will inform the student and give the student an alternative timeframe.
- Where the Dean of Studies has made the original decision, a Head of Program will substitute for the Dean of Studies in this process.

8.3 External arbitration review procedure

If the student remains dissatisfied with the decision by the Dean of Studies or the Head of Program, the student may appeal in writing to NTI's Independent Arbiter. In considering such an appeal, the Independent Arbiter will discuss the case with the Dean of Studies.

The Independent Arbiter will report the finding of the appeal review to the student in writing, with a copy for the student file.

8.4 Other external appeal agencies

Depending on the nature and grounds of the student's complaint, they can appeal externally to other agencies such as the Commonwealth Ombudsman or the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

9. Responsibilities

9.1 NTI has a responsibility to:

- 9.1.1 Ensure that this policy and its guidelines are accessible to all staff and students;
- 9.1.2 Ensure that this policy and its guidelines are implemented and applied consistently across

- all NTI units;
- 9.1.3 Promote good practice in considering applications for academic consideration; and
- 9.1.4 Provide guidelines for considering applications for academic consideration which allow for:
- a) timeliness of response;
 - b) fairness and equitable consideration;
 - c) respect for privacy; and
 - d) keeping all parties informed of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the application of academic consideration.
- 9.2 **Students** have a responsibility to meet deadlines as set out in the Learning & Assessment Guides. Students who cannot meet such deadlines because of circumstances outlined in **Section 5** of this policy, and who are seeking academic consideration must:
- 9.2.1 Lodge an application for academic consideration via Student Portal and provide documentary evidence within the timeframes outlined in **Section 3** of this policy;
 - 9.2.2 Ensure that documentary evidence meets the criteria outlined in **Section 4** of this policy;
 - 9.2.3 Retain the documentary evidence for twelve (12) months from the date of verification and provide such documentation when requested;
 - 9.2.4 Contact the relevant Head of Program if they have not received a response from their Subject Coordinator via Student Services within ten (10) working days of their documentary evidence being verified;
 - 9.2.5 Seek academic or administrative advice as appropriate; and
 - 9.2.6 Behave ethically and honestly in all respects when applying for academic consideration.
- 9.3 **Designated Student Services staff** with access and authority to process documentary evidence have a responsibility to:
- 9.3.1 Ensure that documentary evidence meets the criteria outlined in **Section 4** of this policy prior to processing against applications;
 - 9.3.2 Assess and be satisfied with the authenticity of the documentary evidence prior to processing;
 - 9.3.3 Escalate any documentary evidence identified as fraudulent to the Dean; and
 - 9.3.4 Refer students to the *Student Grievance Policy* in the circumstances outlined in **Section 8** of this policy.
- 9.4 **Subject Coordinators** have a responsibility to:
- 9.4.1 Ensure consistent application of this policy and its guidelines so that all students are treated fairly and equitably as far as practicable;
 - 9.4.2 Review documentary evidence as deemed necessary;
 - 9.4.3 Approve or deny the verified academic consideration application within five (5) working days; and
 - 9.4.4 Escalate applications to the Head of Program or Dean, where deemed appropriate.
- 9.5 **The Head of Program** (or academic nominee) has a responsibility to:
- 9.5.1 Ensure every subject has an assigned Subject Coordinator; and
 - 9.5.2 Ensure that all applications for academic consideration are dealt with according to the provisions of this policy.
- 9.6 **The Dean** has a responsibility to:
- 9.6.1 Provide advice to students in matters relating to their application for academic consideration, including the determination of an outcome where advice from the Subject Coordinator or Head of Program is not available;
 - 9.6.2 Follow up with Subject Coordinator/s who have not responded to applications within five (5) working day timeframe to ensure applications are assessed; and
 - 9.6.3 Act as assessor for escalated applications, following the same assessment guidelines relevant to a Subject Coordinator as outlined in this policy.

10. Privacy and confidentiality

- 10.1 All staff designated to access information contained in applications for academic consideration are obliged to preserve confidentiality in accordance with the NTI's *Privacy Policy*, the *Code of Conduct* and other relevant privacy legislation.
- 10.2 Records relating to academic consideration applications will be retained and disposed of in accordance with the State Records Act 1998, GA 47 – Higher & further education and research records. .

Legislation and Regulation

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Privacy Act 1988

State Records Act 1998

GA 47 – Higher & further education and research records

Contacts

Student Services Office	enquiry@nantien.edu.au
	(02) 4258 0740
Head of Program/Dean of Studies	https://www.nantien.edu.au/about-us/faculty-and-staff/
Commonwealth Ombudsman	www.ombudsman.gov.au
	1300 362 072
TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency)	www.teqsa.gov.au
	1300 739 585

Attachments

Academic Consideration Guidelines