



Policy Statement

Neurosurgical Society of Australasia

ABN 50 283 605 657, ACN 167 861 805

Policy Name: Neurosurgery Anatomy Examination Special Consideration Policy
Version Approval Date: 2024

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy sets out the formal process for special consideration in relation to the Neurosurgery Anatomy Examination (**Examination**) run by the Neurosurgical Society of Australasia (**NSA**) as part of the selection process for the Surgical Education and Training Program in Neurosurgery.
- 1.2 The NSA recognises there may be serious misadventure, accident or extenuating circumstances beyond a candidate's control which is of such severity or gravity that they may impact adversely on Examination attendance or performance.
- 1.3 This Policy has been instituted to support candidates who would under normal circumstances reach their usual demonstrated performance level but are significantly affected by serious misadventure, accident, or extenuating circumstances beyond their control.
- 1.4 Granting special consideration will not take the form of allocating additional marks for the Examination. The original marks allocated **will remain unchanged even if special consideration is granted**.

2.0 PROCESS OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Special consideration refers to those situations where a candidate wishes to formally advise the NSA they have suffered unforeseen severe and/or grave illness, misadventure, accident or have extenuating circumstances and as a result, they have:
 - a) been prevented from attending the Examination at the scheduled time and venue; or
 - b) performed below their usual standard during the Examination.
- 2.2 An application must be submitted as soon as the candidate is aware that they have circumstances which may give rise to special consideration. **The application must be submitted prior to or within 24 hours of presenting for the Examination.** All applications must be submitted in writing with all supporting documentation to set.neurosurgery@nsa.org.au.
- 2.3 It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain documentation which demonstrates the severity and/or gravity and timing of the circumstance. The documentation should also demonstrate how this has disrupted the Examination.
- 2.4 The application must specify the outcome sought having regard to clause 3.4.
- 2.5 Granting special consideration **will not take the form of allocating additional marks for the Examination**. The original marks allocated will remain unchanged even if special consideration is granted.
- 2.6 Candidates must assess whether or not they are fit to present for the Examination.

- 2.7 Candidates affected by severe and/or grave illness, misadventure or extenuating circumstances beyond their control who choose to undertake the Examination cannot apply for special consideration regarding their performance unless the circumstances were:
- Not present before the Examination; or
 - Escalated considerably during the Examination.
- 2.8 Factors contributing to or constituting extenuating circumstances, misadventure or accident must directly relate to the timing of the Examination. These may include:
- medical conditions or events;
 - psychological trauma, impairment or incapacity arising from an event (not the Examination itself); or
 - physical trauma leading to impairment or incapacity resulting from an accident.
- 2.9 Factors which would not be normally considered as contribution to or constituting extenuating circumstances include:
- routine demands of employment and employment related travel;
 - difficulties adjusting to self-directed learning and the demands of surgical work;
 - stress or anxiety normally associated with examinations;
 - routine financial support needs;
 - lack of knowledge of requirements;
 - difficulties with the English language or technology;
 - scheduled anticipated change of address or moving home; and
 - foreseeable traffic delays.
- 2.10 Other circumstances which may be grounds for a special consideration application where the candidate is unable to attend the Examination at the scheduled time and venue may include the following but such applications **must be made at least 24 hours prior to the Examination**:
- emergency service commitments, where a candidate is required to attend an emergency situation and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation and cannot be avoided;
 - legal commitments, where a candidate has been refused excusal from jury duty or is subpoenaed to attend a court, tribunal or hearing, and the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation;
 - compulsory involvement in a ceremony or significant cultural activity of a unique nature where the requirement to attend is specified in supporting documentation from a relevant official or leader of the event/activity.
- 2.11 The following circumstances would not be regarded as grounds for a special consideration application:
- demands of sport, clubs, social, volunteer associations, or extra-curricular activity;
 - recreational travel (domestic or international);
 - personal events, such as weddings.
- 2.12 A candidate who seeks to gain an unfair advantage in the Examination by submitting an application for special consideration that is not genuine is subject to appropriate disciplinary action whether or not the application for special consideration is subsequently withdrawn.

3.0 CONSIDERATIONS AND OUTCOME

- 3.1 The NSA seeks to apply the principle of granting special consideration for short-term illness, serious misadventure or extenuating circumstances which are beyond a candidate's control and which may have impacted on Examination attendance or performance whenever possible.

- 3.2 On the basis of the information provided by the candidate at the time of application, the following may be taken into account in determining whether special consideration is granted:
- a) the severity of the event;
 - b) the history of previous applications for special consideration.
- 3.3 The determination of whether special consideration is granted for the Examination and the outcome if granted, is at the sole discretion of the Surgical Education and Training Board Chair or nominee.
- 3.4 Where special consideration **is granted**, the outcome may include one or more of the following:
- a) the applicant is refunded the Examination Fee;
 - b) the applicant is granted additional time to complete the Examination (only available if the candidate applies for special consideration at least 72 hours prior to the Examination); or
 - c) alternate arrangements are made for the candidate to sit the Examination (only available if the candidate did not present for the Examination).
- 3.5 Granting special consideration **will not take the form of allocating additional marks for the Examination**. The original marks allocated will remain unchanged even if special consideration is granted.
- 3.6 The candidate will be notified of the outcome in writing by email.