

# LATE DISCONTINUATION UNDER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES PROCEDURES 2022

Issued by: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)  
Dated: 20 April 2022  
Last amended: 12 May 2023 (administrative amendments)  
Signature:  
Name: Professor Adam Bridgeman

---

## 1 Purpose and application

- (1) These procedures are to give effect to clause 92 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) (“the policy”).
- (2) These procedures apply to:
  - (a) staff and affiliates; and
  - (b) all students enrolled in a coursework award course.

## 2 Commencement

These procedures commence with full compliance on 21 April 2022

## 3 Interpretation

- (1) Words and phrases used in these procedures and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in the policy.

**Note:** See clause 5 of the Policy.

<b>administrative unit</b>	means the University business unit that is responsible for assessing and determining the outcome of a student’s application for late discontinuation under special circumstances.
<b>review decision</b>	means a decision of a student’s application for review made by the review decision-maker under clause 8 of these procedures.
<b>review decision-maker</b>	means the University staff member who is responsible for reviewing a decision of the administrative unit to decline a student’s application for late discontinuation under special circumstances.

**special circumstances** has the meaning given in the [Coursework Policy 2021](#). At the date of these procedures that is:

for the purposes of late discontinuation under clause 92, circumstances which:

- were beyond the student's reasonable control;
- did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the relevant census date; and
- made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the affected unit or units of study within the relevant teaching period.

Circumstances are beyond a student's reasonable control if a reasonable person would consider them to be:

- unusual, uncommon and abnormal; and
- not due to any action or inaction on the part of the student, and therefore not the responsibility of the student.

**Note:** For further information about how this definition is applied, see clause 92 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and clause 4 of these procedures.

#### 4 Special circumstances

(1) Subject to clause 92 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), the University may grant a student late discontinuation of a unit of study where it is satisfied that:

- (a) the student's progress toward completing the unit requirements has been impacted by special circumstances; and
- (b) the student's circumstances cannot, or could not, be addressed by other forms of special consideration or arrangements.

**Note:** See clauses 82, 83 or 84 of the [Policy](#).

(2) The University will not generally grant a student late discontinuation of a unit of study where the student has:

- (a) attempted all compulsory assessments; and
- (b) met all other mandatory unit of study requirements.

(3) Circumstances that may be considered special circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- (a) the student's physical or mental health underwent an unforeseen change or worsening;
- (b) a member of the student's immediate family died;
- (c) a member of the student's immediate family had a serious medical condition;



- (d) the student's employment status or arrangements changed substantially;
- (e) a natural disaster, or other emergency, in Australia or overseas that either:
  - (i) had a direct impact on the student in the location in which the student was based at the time the natural disaster or other emergency occurred; or
  - (ii) had a direct impact on the student's immediate family in the location in which the student's family was based, or is normally based, at the time the natural disaster or other emergency occurred;
- (f) student, or a member of the student's immediate family, experienced financial difficulties;
- (g) changes made to the unit by the University or another higher education provider which resulted in new course requirements that are disadvantageous to the student;
- (h) an exacerbation, either in severity or duration, of circumstances for which:
  - (i) the student had previously been granted special consideration or arrangements; and
  - (ii) a faculty determines it is unsuitable to provide further or alternative forms of special consideration or arrangements; or
- (i) any other such circumstances that the University is satisfied made it unreasonable to expect the student to have completed the requirements for the unit.

## 5 Applications for late discontinuation under special circumstances

- (1) Students should seek academic advice regarding the potential impact of late discontinuation of a unit or units of study on the student's ability to meet essential progression requirements of the relevant award course, including any unit of study pre- or co-requisites.

**Note:** Student and other visa holders should also seek advice about the potential impact of unit discontinuation on their compliance with any relevant visa conditions and related arrangements.
- (2) Applications for late discontinuation under special circumstances must be made by the affected student, except where an application for special consideration has been referred by an Associate Dean under subclause 14(12)(d)(ii) of the [Assessment Procedures 2011](#) for consideration under clause 92 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and these procedures.
  - (a) Applications made by a person other than the student, including immediate family members or staff of the University and its affiliated entities, will not generally be considered except in serious extenuating circumstances as determined at the discretion of the administrative unit.

- (3) Applications for late discontinuation under special circumstances must be made in accordance with the time periods specified in subclause 92(2) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).
  - (a) Where a student makes an application outside the specified time periods, it is the student's sole responsibility to provide sufficient evidence at the time the application is made to demonstrate that there was good reason why the application could not be made at an earlier time.
  - (b) Faculties and decision-makers may not impose alternative time periods to those specified in subclause 92(2) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).
- (4) Applications for late discontinuation under special circumstances must be submitted through the electronic form specified by the University for this purpose.
  - (a) Applications submitted by means other than the specified electronic form will not generally be considered except in serious extenuating circumstances as determined by the administrative unit.
- (5) In accordance with the requirements of subclauses 92(5) to 92(7) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), an application for late discontinuation under special circumstances must:
  - (a) specify the affected unit or units of study;
  - (b) set out the reasons why the student's circumstances:
    - (i) were beyond the student's reasonable control;
    - (ii) did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the relevant census date;
    - (iii) made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the affected unit or units of study;
    - (iv) could not be addressed by other forms of special consideration or arrangements as provided for in clauses 82, 83 and 84 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and clause 14 of the [Assessment Procedures 2011](#); and
    - (v) where a student successfully completed the requirements of other units taken concurrently within the same teaching block, explain why only the affected unit or units were impacted; and
  - (c) be accompanied by sufficient and relevant supporting documentation consistently with clause 6 of these procedures.
- (6) The administrative unit will acknowledge receipt of a student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances within three working days.

## 6 Supporting documentation and evidence

- (1) In accordance with subclause 92(5) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), students must provide sufficient and relevant supporting documentation to enable the University to form a view of the circumstances independently of any personal statements made by the student.



- (2) Supporting documentation and other evidence of special circumstances must:
  - (a) be provided in English;
  - (b) if digitised copies are provided in lieu of original documents, be certified by a person authorised in the relevant jurisdiction to certify copies of original documents; and
  - (c) include the contact details for those individuals or organisations providing supporting documentation so that further information or advice may be obtained, if necessary.
- (3) Student declarations will not be accepted as supporting documentation except where associated with a previous application for special consideration referred by an Associate Dean under subclause 14(12)(d)(ii) of the [Assessment Procedures 2011](#) for consideration under clause 92 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and these procedures.

## 7 Determination and communication of the decision

- (1) The administrative unit will endeavour to communicate the decision about a student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances within 20 working days of the date on which the application was received.
  - (a) Where the administrative unit determines that it is unlikely it will be able to communicate a decision within 20 working days, the administrative unit will notify the student in writing and provide an anticipated timeframe within which the decision will be made.
- (2) The administrative unit may decline an application made outside the time periods specified in subclause 92(2) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) where a student has not provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate why the application could not be made at an earlier time.
  - (a) A decision to decline an application on the basis that it was made outside the specified time periods will generally be communicated to a student within five working days of the date that the application was received.
  - (b) In communicating a decision to decline an application on the basis that it was made outside the specified time periods to the student, the administrative unit:
    - (i) is not required to provide the student with an assessment of the merit of the application under subclause 5(5) of these procedures; and
    - (ii) will inform the student of the procedure for applying for review of the decision as specified in clause 8 of these procedures.
- (3) In assessing a student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances, the administrative unit may:
  - (a) make a decision based solely on the statements made and supporting documentation provided at the time of the application;
  - (b) request further supporting documentation, which should be provided by the student within 10 working days of the date of the notification;  
**Note:** A student may request additional time to provide further supporting documentation, with any such request to be determined at the discretion of the administrative unit.



- (c) seek further information on the student's progress in the affected unit or units, including from:
    - (i) unit of study coordinators or other unit teaching staff, as appropriate;
    - (ii) program directors;
    - (iii) associate deans; or
    - (iv) other academic or professional staff associated with the administration of the affected unit;
  - (d) seek further information or advice from an individual or organisation providing supporting documentation, generally with a request that the response be provided within 10 working days; and
  - (e) review prior applications made by the student, including relevant supporting documentation, for special consideration or arrangements or late discontinuation under special circumstances.
- (4) Where the administrative unit is satisfied that special circumstances apply and the student should be granted late discontinuation of a unit or units of study, the administrative unit will:
- (a) inform the student of the decision in writing, by email and via the system specified by the University for this purpose;
  - (b) apply the outcomes specified in subclause 92(8) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), as applicable; and
  - (c) notify the relevant unit of study coordinator and Associate Dean of the outcome of the student's application, including as may be relevant to the exercise of an Associate Dean's delegation under clause 95 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).
- (5) Where the administrative unit is not satisfied that a student's progress in a unit of study has been impacted by special circumstances, the administrative unit will:
- (a) notify the student of the decision in writing, by email and via the system specified by the University for this purpose;
  - (b) provide the student with the reasons for the initial decision with reference to:
    - (i) the requirements of subclauses 92(5) and 92(6) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and subclause 5(5) of these procedures;
    - (ii) the supporting documentation provided by the student and any further information provided under subclause 6(4) or 7(3);
  - (c) inform the student of the procedure for applying for review of the decision as specified in clause 8 of these procedures; and
  - (d) notify the relevant unit of study coordinator and Associate Dean of the outcome of the student's application.

## **8 Applications for review of a decision to decline a student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances**

- (1) In accordance with subclause 92(9) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), a student may apply for a review of a decision taken under clause 7 of these procedures to decline the student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances.

- (2) Applications for review must:
  - (a) be made within 20 working days of the date on which the decision was first communicated to the student in writing; and
  - (b) be submitted through the electronic form specified by the University for this purpose.
- (3) A student may seek an extension of time to submit an application for review, with any such extension to be determined at the discretion of the review decision-maker.
- (4) Applications submitted by means other than the specified electronic form will not generally be considered except in serious extenuating circumstances as determined at the discretion of the review decision-maker.
- (5) Applications for review may be made on the basis of any of:
  - (a) the merit of the decision;
  - (b) a material mistake as to the facts; or

**Note:** See subclauses 92(5) and 92(6) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#) and subclause 5(5) of these procedures

  - (c) perceived procedural errors made by the administrative unit when making the decision.
- (6) An application for review that is based on the merit of the decision:
  - (a) must clearly set out the reasons why the student believes the decision did not take full account of the circumstances reported by the student; and
  - (b) may include additional supporting documentation not provided by the student:
    - (i) at the time the original application was made; or
    - (ii) in response to a request for further information made under subclause 7(3).
- (7) An application for review which claims there were procedural errors in the making of the decision must identify specific clauses of University rules, policies or procedures that the student believes have been misapplied.
- (8) The review decision-maker will acknowledge receipt of a student's application for review within three working days.

## **9 Determination and communication of the review decision**

- (1) The review decision-maker will endeavour to communicate the outcome of a student's application for review made under clause 8 of these procedures within 15 working days.
- (2) When conducting their review, the review decision-maker may seek further information not already sought under subclause 7(3), including with respect to any additional supporting documentation provided by the student under subclause 8(6)(b) in the context of the student's application for review.



- (3) In determining the outcome of a student's application for review, the review decision-maker may:
  - (a) affirm the initial decision to decline the student's original application; or
  - (b) make a new decision to grant the student's application for late discontinuation under special circumstances.
- (4) Where, after concluding their review, the review decision-maker makes the decision to affirm the initial decision to decline the student's original application, the review decision-maker will:
  - (a) notify the student of the review decision in writing, by email and via the system specified by the University for this purpose;
  - (b) provide the student with the reasons for the review decision, including with reference to any additional supporting documentation;
  - (c) inform the student of any further avenues of review external to the University; and
  - (d) notify the relevant unit of study coordinator and Associate Dean of the outcome of the student's application for review.
- (5) Where, after concluding their review, the review decision-maker makes a new decision to grant the student late discontinuation under special circumstances, the review decision-maker will:
  - (a) inform the student of the review decision in writing, by email and via the system specified by the University for this purpose;
  - (b) apply the outcomes specified in subclause 92(8) of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#), as applicable; and
  - (c) notify the relevant unit of study coordinator and Associate Dean of the outcome of the student's application for review, including as may be relevant to the exercise of an Associate Dean's delegation under clause 95 of the [Coursework Policy 2021](#).



## NOTES

### Late Discontinuation Under Special Circumstances Procedures 2022

Date adopted:	20 April 2022
Date commenced:	21 April 2022
Date amended:	11 May 2023 (administrative amendment)
Document owner:	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)
Review date:	21 April 2027
Related documents:	<i>University of Sydney (Coursework) Rule 2014</i> <i>University of Sydney (Student Discipline) Rule 2016</i> <i>University of Sydney (Student Academic Appeals) Rule 2021</i> <i>Coursework Policy 2021</i> <i>Academic Integrity Policy 2022</i>

## AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision	Amendment	Commencing
related documents	replaced 'Academic Honesty in Coursework Policy 2015' with 'Academic Integrity Policy 2022'	12 May 2023