

## International - Special Consideration Procedure

<b>Document Name:</b>	International - Special Consideration Procedure
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<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Chief Recruitment Manager International
<b>Functional Owner:</b>	Manager, Shared Services International
<b>QAS Officer</b>	TBA
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<b>Version:</b>	Version 1. This version is based on the current PR 4.6 in Open Space.

<b>Scope:</b>	<b>Course Type</b>	Non-accredited Training Course
	<b>RTOs:</b>	Open Colleges Pty Ltd
	<b>Partner RTOs</b>	No

### **Communication:**

All Policies, Procedures, Forms and Guidelines are loaded into the Quality Management System (QMS) in Firefly. This will automatically update documents in OCTiVE and OpenSpace. Updates are communicated to staff through Firefly Chatter, Trainers and Assessors through OCTiVE News and students through the Student Lounge in OpenSpace.

## 1. Scope

This procedure applies to any student who experiences severe and prolonged difficulties that impedes their ability to continue with their course for the foreseeable future in relation to either medical, financial or personal difficulties or experiences a significant disadvantage as a result of a course change OC implements as part of continuous improvement or Registered Training Organisation regulatory requirements.

## 2. Definitions

**2.1** Special Consideration is defined as:

- Severe and prolonged difficulties that may impact on a student's ability to complete their course; or
- A significant disadvantage as a result of a course change OC implements as part of continuous improvement or RTO regulatory requirements, which cannot be addressed under clause 2.3 below.

**2.2** Open Colleges defines severe and prolonged difficulties as a set of circumstances that:

- Could not reasonably have been anticipated;
- Was beyond the control of the student;
- Caused extended and substantial disruption impacting the students ability to complete the course requirements; or
- Experiences a significant disadvantage that has not be able to be addressed by OC as a result of a course change OC implements as part of continuous improvement or RTO regulatory requirements.

For the avoidance of doubt OC does not define Special Consideration as:

- Changing jobs;
- Changing work hours;
- Moving address (including inter-state or international moves);
- Course changes as a result of a regulatory change governing OC;
- Finding the course more difficult, time consuming or stressful than the student had expected; or
- Being made redundant, retrenched, or otherwise resigns from or terminates employment or has their employment terminated.

**2.3** If a material change is made to a course by OC as part of continuous improvement or RTO regulatory requirements, OC will:

- Provide the affected students with 14 days' notice by email of the change; and
- Work with students to address any potential disadvantage as a result of the change, which may include:
  - Extending the Maximum Duration of the course;
  - Providing additional learning support services;

- Facilitating a transfer to a different OC course; or
- Providing options to complete an older version of the course (subject to availability and compliance with relevant regulations).

### 3. Procedures

#### 3.1 Lodging and Application for Special Consideration

Students applying for Special Consideration must meet the following conditions:

- Be up-to-date with all course fees; and
- Submit a request for Special Consideration by completing the Special Consideration Form (INT - FR4.16) and sending to Student Support by email [studentsupport@opencolleges.edu.au](mailto:studentsupport@opencolleges.edu.au) with all relevant documentation.

The information and supporting documentation provided should demonstrate that the circumstances are severe and prolonged and impact the student's ability to complete their course.

It is recommended that students, who wish to apply for Special Consideration, should first contact Student Support to discuss the matter with a Student Support Officer (SSO).

#### 3.2 Receipt of Applications for Special Consideration

On receiving an application for Special Consideration, the Student Support Officer (SSO) will:

- Log the Special Consideration as a Case in Firefly;
- Provide the student with their Case Number and confirmation receipt of the application within 5 business days; and
- Refer the Special Consideration and any supporting documentation to the Team Leader, Student Support (or delegate).

#### 3.3 Review of Application for Special Consideration

On lodging of the application for Special Consideration, the Team Leader, Student Support will:

- Investigate the Special Consideration case;
- Confirm the student meets the criteria for Special Consideration as defined;
- Obtain any additional information, if required, regarding the application; and
- Make a recommendation for an outcome to Manager Shared Services International.

The Manager Shared Services International will:

- Review the recommendation and supporting evidence; and
- Make a final decision on the outcome of the application.

The Team Manager (International), Student Support will communicate the final outcome in writing to the student including:

- For approved applications, any proposed solutions; or
- For rejected applications, the reasons for the decision.

### **3.4 Assessment of Disadvantage as a Result of Course Change**

The Student Support Team Leader (SSTL) or delegate will liaise with the Chief Recruitment Manager International or their delegate to determine any disadvantage based on course changes. Upon review and if a disadvantage is determined a suitable offer will be made to the student as outlined in clause 3.5.

### **3.5 Granting of Special Consideration**

OC may grant Special Consideration in circumstances where:

- The student satisfies the criteria for Special Consideration in clause 2 above; and
- One of the following two conditions applies:
  - There has been a material change to the students' course resulting in a material disadvantage, which cannot be addressed by OC as per clause 2.3; or
  - The student has applied for and been granted a Course Deferral in accordance with the Student Agreement (INT - DC1.2) by submitting a Course Deferment Request Form (INT - FR4.7) and documentation outlining their circumstances by email to student support [studentsupport@opencolleges.edu.au](mailto:studentsupport@opencolleges.edu.au) and the circumstances under which the student was granted the Course Deferral are continuing and serious which will materially affect their ability to continue with their course.

If Special Consideration is granted, OC may agree to:

- An extension of the Maximum Duration of the course;
- Provide additional support services;
- Release the student from the payment of future instalments; and/or
- Grant a pro-rata refund of the Course Fees (taking into account the portion of the course that has been completed and the costs associated with the provision of learning materials).

### **3.6 Timeframe for Processing Special Consideration Applications**

OC will endeavour to provide an outcome for the application for Special Consideration within 20 business days from receipt of all necessary supporting documentation in relation to the application.

#### **4. Quality and Continuous Improvement**

This Policy, and its related Procedures and Guidelines, is subject to systematic review, evaluation and improvement.

Specific review mechanisms include:

- Executive Team
- Education Management Team
- Results of Student and Trainer and Assessor Surveys
- Informal Student and Trainer and Assessor Feedback

#### **5. Related Legislation & Guidelines (applying to Australia) but used as the framework for Open Colleges International**

- Commonwealth of Australia Privacy Act 1988

## Related Forms and Documents

	Location		
	OpenSpace	Website	QMS
<b>Procedures</b>			
INT - PR4.1 Academic Support Procedures	X	X	X
INT - PR4.2 Learning Support Procedures	X	X	X
INT - PR4.3 Peer Support Procedures	X	X	X
INT - PR4.5 Student Administration Support Procedures	X	X	X
INT - PR7.1 Complaints Procedure	X	X	X
<b>Related Documents</b>			
INT - DC1.3 Schedule of Administrative Fees	X	X	X
<b>Forms</b>			
INT - FR4.1 Academic Referral Form	X	-	X
INT - FR4.2 Learning Support Referral Form	X	-	X
INT - FR4.4 Student Administration Escalation Form	X	-	X
INT - FR1.1 Enrolment Form	X	X	X
INT - FR4.5 Course Cancellation Request Form	X	X	X
INT - FR4.6 Course Extension Request Form	X	X	X
INT - FR 4.7 Course Deferment Request Form	X	X	X
INT - FR 4.11 Third Party Authority Form	X	X	X
INT - FR 4.16 Special Consideration Request Form	X	X	X
INT - FR7.1 Formal Complaint Form	X	X	X

### How can we improve this document?

If you can identify opportunities for us to improve this document, please email [improvements@opencolleges.edu.au](mailto:improvements@opencolleges.edu.au). This request will automatically be logged on our Continuous Improvement Register. Please include the document reference number in your email and specific details about how we can improve the document.