Special Examination Arrangements Part One - Policy Overview

Welcome

This video will cover:

* + What is ‘Special Provision’?
  + What are ‘Special Examination Arrangements’?
  + When are they appropriate?
  + What conditions do they apply to?
  + What types of Special Examination Arrangements are there?
  + What are the school’s responsibilities?

Special Provision

The underlying principle of the VCAA Special Provision Policy is to ensure that appropriate, fair and reasonable options are available for students to demonstrate their capabilities if their learning program and/or assessment is affected by disability, illness, impairment or other circumstances.

* *Special provision can enable impacted students to participate fully in learning activities.*
* *And remove barriers to a student’s ability to show assessors what they know and can do.*

Special Provision should provide equivalent, alternative arrangements for students, but not confer an advantage to any student over other students.

* *Special Provision does not provide an advantage.*
* *And it is not about compensating for learning that has not taken place*.

Special Provision

Special Provision can be school based or for VCE external assessments

Schools are responsible for determining eligibility and the nature of the provisions for classroom learning and school based assessments.

* For students with chronic conditions, schools are encouraged to align their internal practice with what is likely to be approved at VCE level.
* For students from year 7, the VCAA has an early engagement process – and schools are encouraged to contact the Special Provision team if they are unsure if what if what is being put in place at the school level is in line with VCAA policies.
* Schools should regularly review school based provision to ensure they still meet the needs of the student – a student who requires rest breaks one year may not require this same provision the following year.
* Special Provisions for Unit 3-4 external assessments must be approved by the VCAA and includes:
* Special Examination Arrangements; and
* Derived Examination Scores

Special Examination Arrangements

* Special Examination Arrangements are reasonable adjustments made to the format, or procedure, of a VCE examination.
* Students with a disability or illness, may require Special Examination Arrangements to enable them to access examination questions or to communicate their responses.
* Special Examination Arrangements remove barriers to the student’s ability to show the assessors what they know and can do, they do not give students an advantage.
* The same academic standards and assessment criteria still apply.
* Examinations completed using Special Examination Arrangements are marked the same as any other examination.
* Special Examination Arrangements cannot be granted where they will directly impact the ability of students to demonstrate the skills or knowledge that is the focus of the assessment.
* SEAs are available for all VCE external assessments – including the GAT

School Responsibilities

* Schools identify students who require special examination arrangements for both school based and external assessments.
* This can happen at any point in the students schooling.
* We would expect students with chronic conditions to be well known to schools as they are usually identified early in the students schooling
* Schools engage with the VCAA on behalf of students – and need to communicate openly and honestly with students and their parents about reasonable adjustments that maintain the integrity of the assessment.
* Schools are encouraged to engage with the VCAA as part of our early **engagement process**. Special Provision staff can discuss with you what is happening for the student and what provisions you are thinking of trialing.
* Schools apply to the VCAA for Special Examination Arrangements on behalf of students and communicate VCAA decisions to students and their families.
* The application closing date is the last day of term one – being 8 April in 2022.

When are arrangements appropriate?

* Special Examination Arrangements may be needed if a student’s performance in an examination is impacted by a disability or illness and that condition is impacting on their ability to access or respond to a timed examination.
* So the main consideration is the impact of the disability or illness on the student’s ability to show what they have learned and not the existence of the disability or illness alone.
* The integrity of the exam must be maintained - the adjustments made to an examination will be designed to facilitate access and will not in any way remove or reduce the requirement to demonstrate a skill or knowledge that is the focus of the assessment.

Conditions

* Conditions can be acute or short in duration – such as a broken arm
* They can be episodic such as many mental health conditions
* Or they can be chronic or long term – such as a language disorder, learning disorder, motor coordination or vision impairment.

Special Examination Arrangements

* There are a number of Special Examination Arrangements available to students, including Rest breaks , Extra working time, a clarifier, voice to text technology, a separate room, a reader, permission to take medication, or permission to have food and drink in the examination room.
* Details about conditions and potential special examination arrangements and when they might be appropriate is on our website.
* Not every available provision is not listed on the website – we can get very niche requests, it it really is about the needs of the individual student.

Suitable Arrangements

* It is not the case that a particular diagnosis necessarily requires a particular arrangement.
* The functional impact needs to be considered – what is the impact of that condition on that student’s ability to access and respond to an examination?
* And what can be put in place to remove or lesson that impact.
* Appropriate arrangements may vary depending on what is being assessed and the format of the examination – for example what is required for an extended written response may not be necessary for a mathematics examination.
* It is important to trial arrangements to ensure that they will work and review what is put in place in place at regular intervals.
* Consider starting with .. for want of a better word ‘lower level’ arrangements before progressing to more complex arrangements – for example in the case of a student with a generalized anxiety disorder placement in the examination room – near an exit or at the back of the room – may be enough to assist that student, if this does not help consider trialing Rest breaks or permission to leave the room before progressing to a small group setting or a separate room.

Do not need VCAA approval:

Some arrangements do not need VCAA approval, these include:

* Seating arrangements within the main cohort
* Tinted / colored lenses
* Asthma inhalers
* Epi-pens
* Up to 1,500ml of drinking water in a clear bottle.

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