Special Examination Arrangements Part Two - The Application Process

Application Process

Schools are responsible for identifying students who require special examination arrangements, and applying to the VCAA on their behalf – this is done using Special Provision Online (or SPO)

For students with chronic or known conditions we suggest schools start the application process in term four of the previous year so students can use the January holidays to obtain the necessary evidence.

Term Four

* A good place to start is downloading the evidence checklist from VASS, this is an easy way to know exactly what you need for each application (we will look at this in the next slide)
* Download any forms that need to be completed –all applications require the student consent and school based evidence form – many will require the Health Professional Statement.
* Provide the student with any forms they need to have completed and inform them of any independent evidence they need to provide.

Summer holidays

* Students gathers required evidence.

Term One – 2022

* At the start of term one compile all the information and evidence.
* Complete the school-based evidence form
* Potentially, for some students, you may need to administer the essays
* Combine all the required evidence and upload it to Special Provision Online
* The due date is the last day of term one.

Forms and Support material

* All forms and support material are available on VASS
* Systems Admin > Downloads > search for “Special Provision”
* We are going to look quickly at the Evidence checklist – this is the best place to start and is an easy way to make sure you are gathering the mandatory evidence – use it to inform students and families

Evidence checklist

* The evidence checklist is divided into two sections
* The first section is the evidence required for all applications – being the student consent and school based evidence form.
* After that is evidence required for specific conditions – for example we can see that for a specific learning disorder all applications must have a cognitive assessments – if you are applying due to an impairment in written expression you will also need to provide the essays, if you are applying due to an impairment in reading you will need to provide the Progressive achievement test in reading and so on.

Completing the school-based evidence form

Information provided on the school based evidence form is integral to the application. The more information you can give the panel the better. So I am just going to look at a couple of points

1. What is happening for this student during assessments? *what barriers have been observed at school and what has the school found helps this student to show what they know and can do..*
2. What evidence did the school use to determine the student required special examination arrangements – *why does the school believe the student is not performing as expected? For example that the student’s performance is not related to a lack of knowledge but to a barrier in their ability to access and respond to an examination?*
3. Which provisions, if any, have been used by the student for school-based assessments?

*For chronic conditions we generally expect a history of provisions being required at school, if the student has not previously required provisions – it is helpful to explain to the panel why this has not been the case?*

*If the school is requesting an arrangement not currently required for SACS again it can be helpful to clarify why this student requires the arrangements for VCE external assessments but not school based assessments.*

*And finally have other provisions been trialed? And If not why not? For example before requesting a separate room due to a generalized anxiety disorder did the school trial positioning in the exam room? Or have rest breaks been trialed? If not it can be helpful to explain why they were not considered appropriate for this student.*

Special Provision Online (SPO)

Applications are lodged using Special Provision Online.

Special Provision Online is a very simple to follow system.

It will take you through a series of steps – depending on the student’s disability or illness and the provisions you are requesting.

* You will need to log on to special provision online through VASS – which we will look at in a moment
* You will need to initiate a new application
* When you are in the application you will be asked to upload the signed student consent
* Next comes the school-based evidence form
* Then select the disability or illness
* The provision request screen will show you some of the more common provisions for this condition
* Select the provisions required – if the provision is not listed enter it in the text entry box provided
* Lastly you will need to upload any other mandatory evidence required (such as a health provisional statement or cognitive assessment)
* And review and submit the application

It is important to make sure you upload the correct evidence to the online application carefully. Submitting an incomplete application can result in a delay in the VCAA making a decision.

Accessing Special Provision Online

SPO is accessed through VASS. Click on ‘Special Provision’ and select ‘Special Examination Arrangements’.

Click the ‘Special Examination Arrangements Application’ button to launch Special Provision Online

You must be in the VASS Administrator or Principal Statistics VASS user access groups to access SPO.

Home page

New applications are initiated from the SPO home page by clicking on “Student/Search/New SEA Application”.

Help page

Under the help tab are all the standard forms and documents – including the evidence checklist.

Here you will also find the School User Manual and video demonstrating the end to end online application lodgment process.

VCAA responsibilities

* On receipt of an application the VCAA will determine a student’s eligibility for Special Examination Arrangements.
* The VCAA convenes an experienced panel to assess the applications. The panel is made up of a number of professional experts including: ex school principals, educational psychologists, speech pathologists and occupational therapists.
* The panel considers each application on the basis of:
  + Independent professional and/or academic assessments, and
  + School-based history and evidence provided within the application
* The prime consideration is:
  + The impact of the disability or illness on the students capacity to sit examinations, and
  + what reasonable adjustments can be made that maintain the integrity of the assessment./

Appeals

* Schools can appeal a VCAA decision
* They have 14 days with in which to do so
* New and compelling evidence is required
* Information provided in the original application can also be referenced
* Appeals can be lodged from the Decision Summary Tab in SPO

Applying for previously approved arrangements

For students who were approved Special examination arrangements by the VCAA in previous years you may be able to have their approved SEAs applied to their 2022 assessments without completing a full application IF due to a chronic condition.

You just need to complete a one page form and email it to the Special Provision Team.

This form is available from VASS Downloads.

The rollover process is for chronic conditions that are stable in presentation. If the application was due to an acute and episodic condition, for example a mental health condition, you will need to lodge an application on Special provision online and provide updated evidence.

Applying for previously approved arrangements *cont*

If you are unsure if you can use this form refer to the **Appendix** which clearly outlines when it can be used.

We ask that you email these application to special provision by the end of February.

Emergency applications

Schools can apply for emergency SEAs if something happens at the time of an exam.

The emergency application form is available on VASS from two weeks out from the assessment period. Schools need to outline what is needed and there is a section that needs to be completed by the relevant health professional.

If something happens on the day of an exam you can call us and we can approve emergency provisions over the phone.

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