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SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS POLICY FOR EXAMINATIONS

1. INTRODUCTION AND PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 The College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand (CICM) is committed to ensuring the integration of the principles of equal access, participation and opportunity for people with a disability or medical condition in regulations, policies, procedures, decisions and operations.
- 1.2 CICM seeks to apply the principle of reasonable adjustment to remove barriers to participation in examinations, by providing appropriate, supportive environments and resources, which may also include other reasonable adjustments.
- 1.3 CICM will protect the confidentiality of information provided. Specific information relating to identified conditions requiring reasonable adjustment are only conveyed when the nature of the disability, medical condition is relevant, and only with the written consent of the person requesting the adjustment.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to:
 - 2.1.1 All trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) of the College who are undertaking a CICM Examination and applying for reasonable adjustments and /or special consideration.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following relevant training documents.
 - a) T-17 Notes to Candidates for the First Part Examination
 - b) T-18 Notes to Candidates for the Second Part Examination
 - c) Section 5, College Regulations

2.3 Assessments that are covered by this policy:

2.3.1 First Part written and VIVA exam

2.3.2 Second Part (General and Paediatric) written, clinical hot cases and VIVA exam

3. TERMINOLOGY

3.1 The following terminology applies for the purposes of this guideline:

3.2 *Reasonable Adjustment*

3.2.1 Administrative, environmental, or procedural alterations made for an individual with a disability or medical condition which are designed to minimise the disadvantage experienced. Reasonable adjustments are not designed to provide the person with a competitive advantage.

3.3 *Special Consideration*

3.3.1 Refers to circumstances where a candidate formally notifies CICM that they have suffered unforeseen severe and/or grave illness, misadventure, accident or have extenuating circumstances that have impacted on their ability to undertake assessment.

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 *Reasonable Adjustments*

4.1.1 Reasonable adjustments may be required for any number of health or personal circumstances. These circumstances may include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) acute injury or illness
- b) managing a chronic medical condition
- c) temporary or permanent disability
- d) pregnancy and breastfeeding

4.2 *Special Considerations*

4.2.1 Special considerations may be required for unforeseen circumstances. These circumstances may include but are not limited to the following:

- a) Loss and bereavement
- b) Acute injury or illness
- c) Hardship or trauma

4.2.2 Applicants who are granted special consideration will be able to withdraw from the exam without forfeiting an attempt and will be eligible for a full refund of exam fees.

4.2.3 In the First Part and Second Part (General and Paediatric) exams, applicants who receive special consideration will be able to withdraw from the exam without forfeiting an “exemption” in situations where they have previously passed the written component. Approved applicants will be exempted from the written component at the next two consecutive exam sittings following the approval. Candidates are still required to apply for subsequent oral section attempts following being able to withdraw from the exam where special consideration is granted, in line with section 5 of the Regulations.

4.2.4 Special consideration will not consist of altering pass marks, changing answer scores or altering weighting for questions.

4.3 Some circumstances are not generally considered to be grounds for special considerations, including:

4.3.1 Stress which would ordinarily be associated with preparation for or performance in assessments and/or examinations, including studying and travelling.

4.3.2 Stress related to personal and/or work commitments including specific rostering arrangements leading up to the assessment or examination or arising ordinarily in the course of practicing intensive care medicine.

5. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

5.1 All adjustments / considerations are made on an individual basis and when assessing whether a particular adjustment is reasonable, all relevant circumstances will be taken into consideration.

5.2 Reasonable adjustments and special consideration can only be applied when a candidate can demonstrate with appropriate documentation that they are disadvantaged. Supporting documentation may include:

5.2.1 Medical certificate

5.2.2 Professional certificate

5.2.3 Statutory declaration

5.3 Where appropriate or if requested, documentation should be provided by an independent qualified medical professional or authorised practitioner.

6. APPLICATION TIMEFRAMES AND PROCESS

6.1 All eligible candidates can apply for special consideration or a reasonable adjustment by

making an application using the appropriate form. The application should be supported with the appropriate documentation as highlighted in section 5, and the need for documentation will be dependent on the request.

6.2 *Reasonable Adjustments*

6.2.1 An application for reasonable adjustment should be submitted at the time of entering the training program, or, at the latest, by the application closure of the relevant examination. Failure to declare specific requirements at the earliest opportunity may lead to a delay or inability to provide and implement alternative requirements.

6.2.2 In the event that circumstances arise that would require a reasonable adjustment following the closure of the examination application, the candidate should contact the examinations department to discuss the possibility of providing reasonable adjustments to facilitate the exam attempt or alternatively apply for special consideration.

6.3 *Special Consideration*

6.3.1 Candidates should notify the College prior to the examination commencing or as early as possible for their need for special consideration. A formal application should be made as soon as practicable.

6.3.2 Applicants who are granted special consideration will be eligible for a full refund of exam fees if they choose to withdraw from the exam.

6.3.3 Special Consideration cannot be granted retrospectively; once a candidate has elected to attend a sitting, special consideration will not be granted after the exam for events that occurred before it.

6.4 The College is entitled to consider whether the request is reasonable or not, independently of the specialist/s recommendations provided in the supporting documentation.

7. DECISIONS

7.1 *Decision makers*

7.1.1 The Chair of the relevant Examination Committee will be tasked with reviewing all applications for reasonable adjustment and special consideration and will be the decision maker.

7.1.2 The Chair reserves the right to escalate the request to the Assessments Committee in the event of uncertainty to ensure responses are consistent and fair.

7.2 *Timeframes*

7.2.1 The candidate will be notified as soon as is practicable after the provision of the application and all supporting documents.

7.2.2 In the event that a last-minute need for special consideration, the College will provide a final decision prior to the commencement of the exam sitting.

7.3 *Reconsideration, Review and Appeals*

7.3.1 Any person who is dissatisfied with and adversely affected by a decision made in line with this policy may apply to have the decision reconsidered, following the College's IC-23 Reconsideration, Review and Appeals policy.

7.3.2 Once an applicant has accepted the reasonable adjustments offered by CICM the condition in question cannot be used as the basis for subsequent review or appeals of an examination result. For example, if reasonable adjustments are granted for a medical condition, a request for reconsideration, review, or appeal of an unsuccessful examination attempt on the basis of the medical condition will not be granted.

References and sources

IC-23 Appeals, Review and Reconsideration Processes

Acknowledgements

T-19 Working Group
Examinations Department

Document Control

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Revision History

Date	Pages revised / brief explanation of review
2023	The T-19 Working Group reviewed and updated the policy appropriately to ensure that it is inclusive and equitable. The update included reviewing language, shifting from a medical perspective of health to a social perspective of health, and creating a special consideration and reasonable adjustments application process.

Further reading

T-13 Guidelines for Assisting Trainees Identified as Requiring Additional Support
T-17 Notes to candidates for the First Part Examination
T-18 Notes to candidates for the Second Part Examination
T-27 Assessment of Specialists International Medical Graduates
T-33 Guide to CICM Training: Trainees
Section 5, College Regulations

Publishing Statement

Published by CICM: 2023. This Training Document has been prepared with regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case. The College's Training Documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure the current version has been obtained. Training Documents have been prepared according to the information available at the time of their publication, and the practitioner should therefore have regard to any information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently. Whilst the College endeavors to ensure its Training Documents are as current as possible at the time of publication, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or material which may have become available subsequently.

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