1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the criteria for applying for special consideration of the outcome of a Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) examination.

An application will only be considered in the event the candidate's result is not an outright pass but a minimum standard has been met. Special consideration cannot be considered where a candidate’s result is below the minimum standard.

2. KEYWORDS

Special consideration, medical grounds, compassionate grounds' minimum standard

3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Conditions for application

3.1.1. A candidate may apply for special consideration where temporary illness, bereavement or other serious matter beyond the control of the candidate has had an adverse effect or has the potential to have an adverse effect on their performance.

3.1.2. The adverse event must be immediately prior (within the week) the examinations to be held) or during the examination and is one that may ordinarily result in personal leave from employment.

3.1.3. It is the candidate's responsibility to determine their physical and mental fitness when presenting for an examination. A candidate has the opportunity to withdraw at any time. The relevant examination committee will take this into account when considering an application for special consideration.

3.2. Application

3.2.1. The special consideration application form, available on the RACS website, and supporting documentation must be received within the stipulated timelines:

a. Except for the Fellowship Examination clinical and viva components, an application must be received within 24 hours of completing the examination or a component of the examination.

b. An application for special consideration during the Fellowship Examination clinical and viva components must be received by the Examinations Department by the end of the final component of the examination.

3.2.2. An application for special consideration which relates to an incident that occurred during an examination must provide details of the incident.

a. The incident must have been brought to the attention of the invigilator, Examiner or RACS staff member at the examination venue at the time it occurred.

3.2.3. An application cannot be made on behalf of any other candidate.
3.3. Medical or Compassionate Grounds

3.3.1. Medical grounds must comprise serious illness or injury (physical and/or psychological).
   a. Pregnancy per se is not a ground for special consideration, but a serious medical condition due to pregnancy is a medical ground.

3.3.2. Compassionate grounds include:
   a. The death of a close family member; or
   b. Serious illness or injury of a close family member; or
   c. Natural disaster or other catastrophic event.

3.3.3. Circumstances which do not constitute grounds for Special Consideration include:
   a. Ordinary or expected stress or anxiety associated with examinations;
   b. Ongoing and chronic serious illnesses of self or close family member;
   c. Minor illnesses or medical conditions;
   d. Work commitments;
   e. Mistaken timing or difficulties locating an assessment venue; and
   f. Optional commitments of a personal nature.

3.4. Supporting documentation

3.4.1. An application for special consideration on medical grounds must be accompanied by a current medical report or certificate from a registered medical practitioner in Australia or New Zealand who is the candidate’s treating practitioner and not a relative of the candidate. This report must be obtained no more than one (1) week before the application.

3.4.2. The supporting documents should include the following details:
   a. The nature and severity of the medical condition; and
   b. The medical practitioner’s opinion on the effect of the illness or injury on the ability of the candidate to participate in the examination.

3.4.3. An application for special consideration on compassionate grounds must include, as relevant:
   a. A bereavement notice
   b. A statutory declaration or other
   c. A current medical certificate or report from the treating practitioner where illness of a partner, child or member of the candidate’s immediate family, including the name of the person and nature and severity of the illness. The candidate must provide written consent from the relevant person for RACS to receive the information regarding their illness;
   d. A copy of a police incident report.
3.5. Consideration and outcomes

3.5.1. An application for special consideration will be considered after examination marks have been collated.

a. If a candidate has been unsuccessful, but has met the minimum standard as described in 3.6, the governing committee of the examination will then consider the application.

b. If the candidate has passed or failed to meet the minimum standard, the application will not be considered.

3.5.2. Depending on the examination, and whether the application for special consideration has been approved, one of the following outcomes will apply:

a. The application is not approved and the fail result stands;

b. The application is approved, and the result is elevated to a pass;

c. The application is approved and the result and attempt is omitted

- Omission is only applicable to examinations with a maximum number of attempts.
- Should an omission be granted, any time limits associated with the requirement to pass an examination remain and are not extended.
- Omission does not entitle the candidate to a refund of the examination fee.

3.6. Minimum standards

The defined score range required for special consideration to achieve elevation to a pass for an examination is as follows:

3.6.1. Clinical Examination

A candidate’s score must fall within one standard error of measurement below the pass mark and must pass at least two stations of each type (Examination, Non-technical Skills, History and Procedure).

3.6.2. Generic Surgical Science Examination

A candidate’s score must fall within the error width below the pass mark and achieve the minimum standard in each discipline. The discipline components are Anatomy, Pathology and Physiology.

3.6.3. Cardiothoracic Surgical Sciences and Principles Examination

a. Written component: A candidate’s score must fall within one standard error below the predetermined cut score.

b. Anatomy Viva: A candidate’s overall score must be in the discussion band (i.e. 19 or 20).

3.6.4. Orthopaedic Principles and Basic Science Examination

A candidate’s score must fall within two percentage points below the cut score.
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<tr>
<th>3.6.5.</th>
<th>Specialty Specific Examination in Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery</th>
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<tr>
<td>A candidate’s score must fall within one standard error below the Professional Decision Zone (PDZ). The PDZ is the interval between the derived cut-score (pass mark) and the point that is calculated to be one standard error below this cut-score.</td>
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<th>3.6.6.</th>
<th>Paediatric Anatomy and Embryology Examination</th>
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<td>a. Written component: A candidate’s score must fall within two percentage points below the cut score.</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Anatomy Viva: A candidate’s overall score must be in the discussion band (i.e. 19 or 20).</td>
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<th>3.6.7.</th>
<th>Paediatric Pathology and Pathophysiology Examination</th>
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<td>A candidate’s score must fall within two percentage points below the cut score.</td>
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<th>3.6.8.</th>
<th>Plastic and Reconstructive Surgical Science and Principles Examination</th>
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<td>A candidate’s score must fall within the first standard error of measurement below the pass mark.</td>
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<th>3.6.9.</th>
<th>Specialty Specific Examination in Urology</th>
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<td>A candidate’s score must fall within one standard error below the predetermined cut score.</td>
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<th>3.6.10.</th>
<th>Specialty Specific Examination in Vascular Surgery</th>
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<td>A candidate’s score must fall within one standard error below the Professional Decision Zone (PDZ). The PDZ is the interval between the derived cut-score (pass mark) and the point that is calculated to be one standard error below this cut-score.</td>
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<th>3.6.11.</th>
<th>Fellowship Examination</th>
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<td>A candidate’s overall score must be in the discussion band (i.e. 19 or 20).</td>
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### 4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Policies
- Conduct of the Clinical Examination
- Conduct of the SET Generic Surgical Science Examination
- Conduct of the Generic Surgical Science Examination for Prevocational Doctors
- Conduct of the Cardiothoracic Surgical Sciences and Principles Examination
- Conduct of the Orthopaedic Principles and Basic Science Examination
- Conduct of the Paediatric Anatomy and Embryology Examination
- Conduct of the Paediatric Pathophysiology Examination
- Conduct of the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgical Science and Principles Examination
- Conduct of the Surgical Science Examination in General Surgery
- Conduct of the Surgical Science Examination in Neurosurgery
- Conduct of the Surgical Science Examination in Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery
- Conduct of the Surgical Science Examination in Urology
Conduct of the Surgical Science Examination in Vascular Surgery
Conduct of the Fellowship Examinations

Form
Application for Special Consideration

Approver: Education Board
Authoriser: Council