

Offshore Guidelines for Assessing Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

1. Background

UNSW College (the College) offers some of its Award and Non-Award Programs to offshore Students, i.e., those located outside of Australia.

These offshore Programs may be delivered either directly by the College (College delivered Program) or through a Transnational Education (TNE) Provider (TNE Provider delivered Program), both of which operate under the College's academic and operational standards. The TNE Provider is a third-party provider and TNE refers to the delivery of Programs, Subjects, or services to learners offshore.

The College has Policies and Procedures which require decision-making guided by Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances, whether delivery is onshore or offshore.

To ensure consistency in decision making based on Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances, the College has developed Offshore Guidelines for Assessing Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances.

2. Purpose

These Guidelines provide the College and/or TNE Provider staff and Students undertaking offshore programs, with information as to what will be considered as being Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances, the evidentiary requirements to support a claim of these circumstances and the assessment process, including specific assessment guidelines relating to the medical evidence required.

3. Scope

These Guidelines apply to, but are not limited to, all Students undertaking programs offshore who submit a request or an application made under other relevant College policies which refer to decision-making guided by Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances.

Decision makers for Compassionate and Compelling circumstances will be:

- (a) the College if:
 - i. a College delivered program; or
 - ii. a TNE Provider delivered program, relating to any academic integrity or non-academic integrity issues that impact on College systems or reputation; -or
 - iii. a TNE Provider delivered program relating to the TNE Provider itself; -and
- (b) the TNE Provider for all other compassionate or compelling circumstances.



4. Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances are matters which are, in most cases, beyond the control of the Student and have an impact on their wellbeing or their academic progression.

4.1 Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

Includes, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

- (a) Serious illness or injury;
- (b) Loss, bereavement, or serious illness of a close family member;
- (c) Traumatic experience where a Student is victim of, or a witness to, a serious accident or crime, and this experience has adversely impacted on the Student;
- (d) Where the College or TNE Provider is unable to offer a pre-requisite subject or unable to offer a full-time load of subjects;
- (e) Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country of the Student that has, or is likely to have, an impact on the Student's ability to continue or commence or continue their studies;
- (f) A situation in which a Student requests Leave of Absence for the reason that he or she is required to undertake military service;
- (g) Any other circumstances that the College considers to be Compassionate or Compelling in nature, in its sole discretion.

4.2 Circumstances Not Considered to be Compassionate or Compelling

The following circumstances are not considered to be Compassionate or Compelling:

- (a) Failure of a Student to understand or seek clarification of the College or TNE Provider requirements as specified in its policies, processes and rules; for example, if a Student misreads the exam timetable;
- (b) Any delay or failure by the Student in checking correspondence sent by the TNE Provider or the College;
- (c) Conflicts of priorities which are to be expected in the normal course of the Student's study, work, family or social life; for example, working while studying and any timetabling challenges that arises because of this work;
- (d) Events that could have been prevented; for example, failing to attend class or an exam because an alarm was not set.

5. Documentary Evidence Requirements

5.1 General Requirements

The table below sets out what is considered to be different types of Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances, and the documentary evidence, translated to English, required to support a claim based on that type. For the College, all documents or supporting evidence is to be submitted in English as per relevant



form instruction. This list is not exhaustive and may include other information that supports the assertion that Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances exist, as deemed by the member of staff assessing the claim.

Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	Documentary Evidence Requirement
Serious illness or injury	A medical certificate from a registered health practitioner stating the Student's inability to attend classes and the timeframe for which the Student experienced medical issues impacting their studies. Please refer to section 5.2 of this Guideline for further information about medical evidence.
Loss or bereavement	• A death certificate or death notice; and • Evidence of the relationship to Student (e.g. birth certificate, passport, family record, etc)
Serious illness of a close family member such as a parent or grandparent.	• Evidence of the illness from a doctor or hospital; and • Evidence of the relationship to Student (e.g. birth certificate, passport, family record, etc).
Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country of the Student that is, or is likely to have, an impact on the Student's ability to continue or commence their studies.	• Media reports of political unrest or natural disaster. • Evidence of Student's residency in the affected area. • Personal statement outlining how the issue impacts Student's ability to study.
A traumatic experience where a Student is a victim of, or a witness to, a serious accident or crime, and this experience has adversely impacted on the Student.	• A police report or incident report. • A hospital letter or psychological report from a registered health practitioner stating the Student's inability to attend classes and the timeframe for which the adverse experience will impact their studies. • A letter which includes a recommendation from an authorised staff member stating the Student's inability to attend classes, Enrolment plan recommendation and the timeframe for which the adverse experience will impact their studies. Please refer to section 5.2 of this Guideline for further information about medical evidence.



Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	Documentary Evidence Requirement
Where a pre-requisite subject is unable to be offered, or full-time Enrolment load is unable to be offered	Signed Study Plan or Reduced Study Load form provided by the relevant College or TNE Provider academic staff member.
Other Circumstances	
Any others circumstances that the College or TNE Provider considers to be compassionate or compelling in nature, at its sole discretion	Any relevant certified document attesting that the situation is outside the Student's control and affects their ability to study.

5.2 Medical Evidence

A medical certificate should include the health practitioner's professional opinion about the impact of the Student's illness or the adverse impacts of a traumatic event, and not simply repeat the Student's claim of the impacts of the illness or event without verifying it. A medical certificate which simply repeats a Student's claim of illness or impact will still be accepted, but it may be weighed against other evidence.

The sensitive nature of medical information including formal diagnosis and/or treatment or care plan, is acknowledged. However, more information about the effect of a Student's medical condition on their studies, may be sought, and the Student may be asked to obtain the health practitioner's professional opinion. Inaccurate or missing information will result in either delayed processing or a Students request may be denied.

5.3 Verification of Documentary Evidence

- (a) The College may verify the documentary evidence (for example, by contacting the medical practitioner or their practice to confirm).
- (b) The submission of fraudulent documentation will be deemed as serious Non-Academic Misconduct and will be managed in accordance with the [Offshore Student Misconduct Policy](#).

6. Assessment of Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances

The College will consider any claim for Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances as set out in this section 6. Students should make a claim for Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances as part of any submission or request under the relevant College policies. All claims must be supported by the documentary evidence required in accordance with section 5 of this Guideline.

Students may submit a claim for Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances to support:

- (a) an application for a refund that departs from the standard terms set out in the ;



- (b) any submission in relation to why a Student is not meeting the attendance requirements;
- (c) any submission in relation to why a Student is not meeting course progress requirements according to the [Offshore Academic Progression and Exclusion Policy](#);
- (d) any submission in relation to seeking Special Consideration under the .

7. Roles and responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities in relation to the application of this Guideline are contained in the relevant policy documents that this Guideline supports.

8. Definitions

Definitions and Acronyms	
Census Date	This is the date within each Study Period when a Student's Enrolment must be finalised and the last day a Student can withdraw from a program without financial penalty.
Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances are generally those beyond a Student's control and which have an impact upon their course progress or wellbeing. Examples of Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances include: (a) Serious illness or injury to the Student or a close family member. (b) Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents (c) Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the Student's studies (d) A traumatic experience, which could include: i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime; which has impacted on the Student. (e) Genuine delays to visas outside of the Student's control.
Enrolment	Enrolment is a process by which Students remain active in their program, subjects are assigned for a specific teaching period based on program requirements and offerings and subsequently Students will be registered for classes.
Non-Academic Misconduct	Conduct that breaches the Student Code of Conduct that is not related to an academic matter
Leave of Absence	A period of up to 28 days leave granted due to illness, unexpected events, compassionate or compelling circumstances. Approved leave of absence may incur academic and/or financial penalties.



Definitions and Acronyms	
Special Consideration	A process for assessing and addressing the impact of events beyond the control of the student that have affected performance.
Student	A person enrolled in an approved Program of study at UNSW College whose Enrolment has not lapsed or been cancelled.
Study Period	Each study period has a designated start and end date, Census Date, date for withdrawal with or without academic penalty (if applicable), and date for release of subject results.

9. Related Policy and Supporting Documents

Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents	
Policy	Offshore Academic Progression and Exclusion Policy Offshore Assessment Policy Offshore Student Fees Policy Offshore Student Refund Policy – College delivered Programs Offshore Student Refund Policy – TNE Provider delivered Programs Offshore Student Misconduct Policy
Form	Reduced Study Load

10. Governance

Offshore Guidelines for Assessing Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	
Category/Business Group	Student Experience
Published Externally (Yes/No)	Yes
Approver	Executive Director, Students
Responsible Officer	Head of Student Experience
Contact Officer	Head of Student Experience
Effective Date	04 Sep 2025
Next Review Date	04 Sep 2028
Version	2.0

11. Revision History

Version	Approved by	Approval date	Effective date	Sections modified
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2.0	Executive Director, Students – Sally Chatterjee	04 September 2025	04 September 2028	Updating policy to be an 'Offshore' policy, incorporating award and non-award programs.
1	Executive Director, Students – Sally Chatterjee	23 July 2024	23 July 2024	N/A

Please visit our website to ensure that you have the latest version of this Policy. Policies are available at: unswcollege.edu.au/about/policies