

APPENDIX 2

Examinations Concessions: Policies and Procedures

Introduction

In accordance with the examinations policy of Rhodes University, students with diagnosed physical or intrinsic learning disabilities, whether permanent or temporary in nature, may apply for certain examinations concessions. These concessions are afforded to students who experience specific learning, physical, sensory or other disabilities, or certain medical conditions impacting on learning and examination writing which will significantly impact on their examination performance and prevent them from demonstrating their true ability in the examinations. Students with severe degenerative disorders will be granted concessions on compassionate grounds. Examinations concessions have been designed to place all students on an equal par, and are not designed to afford students with (a) disability/(ies) any advantage. The aim of any examination process is to give an accurate account of the student's knowledge and/or skills.

Applications are reviewed by the examinations concessions committee who will make a recommendation to Senate. Senate will consider in its absolute discretion applications for examination concessions. The decision to grant extra time lies with Senate alone and not with the health practitioner making the assessment and supporting the application.

Concessions

The following concessions may be applied for and granted by Senate:

- Extra examination time;
- The use of a computer (supported by a written recommendation issued by an occupational therapist, educational psychologist, other clinical or counselling psychologist with proven assessment expertise, neurologist or other medical practitioner);
- Aegrotat examinations for students who suffer from a temporary physical disability (such as injury to the writing hand). The unavailability of an aegrotat will not preclude a student from applying for an examination concession.
- "Other" concessions as recommended by the committee.

The following are not considered as grounds for examinations concessions:

- Conditions that respond well to medication, such as epilepsy, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, without evidence of co-morbid learning disability.
- Conditions where there is no substantial impairment of intellectual function as a result of the condition or the side-effect of medication.

However, if it is clear on the basis of medical assessment that the prescribed medication is not providing optimal results, and an examination concession is recommended by a medical practitioner, the concessions committee will consider an application for (an) examination concession(s).

- Minor forms of learning difficulties which do not significantly impact on students' examination ability *per se*, do not normally constitute a reason for the granting of extra time or other concessions. As in the case of intellectual ability or aptitude, minor learning difficulties are something the student should have learned to cope with and will impact on (intellectual) performance throughout life.
- Not being a first-language English speaker.
- Poor handwriting. However, if the student presents with a diagnosed observable graphic or neurological disorder impacting on their handwriting, an application for extra time or other concessions will be considered, provided that such application is accompanied by the written recommendation of an occupational therapist, neurologist, or other medical specialist.

Procedure

- Students wishing to apply to Senate for examinations concessions must complete an application form obtainable from the Student Bureau. The completed application, with supporting medical affidavits, must be returned to the Student Bureau who will forward these to the examinations concessions committee for consideration. The committee sits formally twice per annum, prior to the June and November examinations. All applications must be submitted by no later than 30 April and 30 September annually. Except in the case of emergency applications, late applications and incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Students with permanent disabilities for which examinations are granted will be required to apply to Senate only once, at the beginning of their academic careers. Students registering at Rhodes for the first time are encouraged to make application at the time of accepting an offer to study at Rhodes to facilitate this process. However, students must inform the Registrar prior to each examination of such concessions.
- All applications must be accompanied by supporting documentation from a registered medical practitioner and/or specialist. Such documentation includes psychological, neurophysical or other relevant professional assessment reports or medical reports not older than 30 months from date of application. Where a student applies for a concession relating to a learning or other disability that has been extant from the age of 16 or thereafter and it is clear that the disability will not self-correct, it shall be sufficient that, where a professional assessment report is older than 30 months from date of application, the student submits an affidavit from a relevant medical specialist confirming the diagnosis and that the concession is supported on medical grounds.
- Note that previous concessions from other institutions, including IEB or government school leavers' examinations, do not in themselves guarantee automatic concessions at Rhodes University. Prior concession will, however, be considered favourably. Applicants are therefore required to lodge evidence of prior concessions along with other supporting documentation upon application for concessions at Rhodes University.
- Students wishing to apply for concessions for tests are required to follow the same application procedure as for examinations.
- The examinations concessions committee will not consider appeals against its recommendations unless substantial additional documentary evidence is provided to indicate that the information at the committee's disposal in the first instance was seriously deficient. Students have a final right of appeal to the Vice-Chancellor.