

Higher School Certificate illness/misadventure applications

ACE 11002

Last Updated: 1 April 2019

Students may lodge an illness/misadventure application if they believe that circumstances occurring immediately before or during a Higher School Certificate examination, and which were beyond their control, diminished their examination performance.

The illness/misadventure application provisions are open only to those Higher School Certificate students who have had an assessment mark or VET estimate submitted for the course in question.

In the case of Higher School Certificate illness/misadventure applications, if the application is upheld, the student will be awarded either their examination mark or a mark derived from their assessment mark and unaffected examination components, whichever is the higher.

The right to submit an illness/misadventure application and the responsibility for doing so rests with the student, except where it is impossible for the student to do so, such as in cases of severe illness.

Student attendance at examinations

NESA recommends that where at all possible students should attend examination sessions. NESA does not, however, expect students to attend an examination against specific documented medical advice. Where students are in doubt they are advised to contact the principal.

Higher School Certificate illness/misadventure applications – procedures for lodging an application

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Lodging the application

Application forms are available on *Schools Online* before examinations commence. An *Information Guide for Students* and full details of submission procedures are given on the form.

Principals should provide the application forms to students on request and should make every attempt to explain the procedures. Principals should not dissuade students from lodging applications.

All illness/misadventure applications relating to written examinations are to be lodged within one week of the student's last examination, and no later than the date of the last HSC examination. Those relating to Higher School Certificate oral and practical examinations must be submitted within one week of the examination or submission date.

All HSC illness/misadventure applications must be submitted to NESAs.

Applications submitted after the closing date will be considered only in exceptional cases.

Supporting evidence

In all cases NESAs require evidence that clearly identifies the disadvantage experienced during the time the student was attempting to complete the examination. Supporting evidence from any source is acceptable but a student's application must include:

- a. a statement from the student explaining how they were affected during the examination session;
- b. a specific medical certificate with details of the date of onset of the illness, plus any additional dates of consultation, together with a statement about how the student's performance in the examination may have been affected. In cases of misadventure, evidence from other sources (eg police statements and/or statutory declarations explaining how the student's performance in the examination may have been affected) should be provided with the date and time of the occurrence and subsequent events;
- c. a presiding officer's report that outlines any observable signs noticed by the supervisor during the examination;
- d. a statement from the student's school principal. This should contain reference to the student's preparation for the examination and any other information deemed relevant to the genuineness of the application. Such a statement is of particular importance in cases where the student was absent from the examination.

Higher School Certificate illness/misadventure applications – grounds for appeal

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As the examination marks are intended to be a measure of a student's actual examination performance, applications must relate to illness or misadventure suffered immediately before or during the examination(s) that has affected the student's examination performance. Applications may be in respect of:

- a. illness or injury – that is, illness or physical injuries suffered directly by the student which allegedly affected the student's performance in the examination(s) (eg influenza, an asthma attack, a cut hand);
- b. misadventure – that is, any other event beyond the student's control which allegedly affected the student's performance in the examination(s) (eg death of a friend or family member, involvement in a traffic accident, isolation caused by a flood).

Unacceptable grounds for appeal

The application process does **not** cover:

- attendance at a sporting or cultural event, or family holiday
- alleged inadequacies of teaching or long-term matters relating to loss of preparation time, loss of study time or facilities. (There may be cases involving the interruption to the completion of an HSC submitted work or loss of materials prepared by the student which NESA will consider, eg major works stolen or destroyed by vandals.)
- disabilities for which NESA has already granted disability provisions, unless an unforeseen episode occurs during the examination (eg a hypoglycaemic event suffered by a diabetic student or a student who has been isolated but is still ill) or further difficulties occur, the authenticity of which is supported by the presiding officer.

Note: A student who has suffered an injury such as a broken writing arm immediately before the examinations will require careful consideration as the student generally will not have had sufficient time to practise with the provision(s) granted.

- long-term illness such as glandular fever, asthma, epilepsy – unless the student suffered a 'flare-up' of the condition immediately before or during the examination(s)
- matters avoidable by the student (eg misreading of timetable; misinterpretation of examination paper).

Higher School Certificate illness/misadventure applications – group application

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When the entire course candidature of a Higher School Certificate examination, or a significant proportion of it, is affected by illness or misadventure, principals need to submit a Whole Group Application form. This form can be accessed through *Schools Online*.

Principals should complete the appropriate section of the Whole Group Application form, or attach a report detailing the incident and its effect on the performance of those students involved. If the illness or misadventure was in a particular examination venue, the application should note students who were accommodated elsewhere or who had left the examination prior to the incident. Where students from another school are sitting examinations at the school submitting the application, that should be noted on the appeal and the principal of the home school notified. Specific students who the principal considers to have been particularly disadvantaged should be identified. These students should be encouraged to submit an individual Illness/Misadventure Application form.

In instances where a small proportion of the course candidature is submitting applications on the basis of a common misadventure (for example, a Drama performance group or students travelling together involved in a car accident), each student involved is to submit an individual Illness/Misadventure Application form. Each form should be cross-referenced and include a list of all other students involved in the incident.