

# Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy

## Section 1 - Introduction

- (1) The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the possible impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s), including formal examinations.
- (2) This policy must be read in conjunction with the [Course Management and Assessment Procedure Manual](#), the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#), the [Supporting Students with Disability Policy](#) and the [Student Professional Experience Policy](#).
- (3) In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and its supporting procedure or the Rule, the Rule made by the Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

## Section 2 - Policy Scope

- (4) This policy applies to all coursework students of the University, including all modes of study, locations and types of assessment items; except to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program refer to: Bachelor of Medicine - JMP Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure.
- (5) Students whose ongoing circumstances may adversely affect their performance should seek advice from their Course Coordinator and support services such as the Disability Support Service, the University Health Service or the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

## Section 3 - Policy Intent

- (6) This Policy is intended to support students who are suffering from adverse circumstances, as described, which were unforeseen and which may affect their academic performance in assessment item(s) as described in the by [Course Management and Assessment Procedure Manual](#).

## Section 4 - Policy Provisions/Principles

### Lodgement of Applications

- (7) All students have the right to submit an application for adverse circumstances affecting assessment items via the online application system. The University reserves the right to determine if an adverse circumstances application should be considered and any subsequent actions to be taken.

### Determinations

- (8) Each application will be assessed on its merits and a previous application will not prejudice a subsequent application

(9) The University may audit the number of applications made by a student and the courses affected.

(10) The University reserves the right to determine the deadline for submission of an Adverse Circumstances application

## **Storage of Information**

(11) All information provided as part of the adverse circumstances policy or its procedure will be kept in confidence in accordance with the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 No 133](#) and the [Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 No 71](#).

## **Outcomes**

(12) Possible outcomes of an application for adverse circumstances affecting an assessment item:

- a. granted an extension of time to submit;
- b. permitted to undertake an examination during the Special Examination Period;
- c. provided with an alternative assessment; or
- d. rejection of application;
- e. reschedule of a placement (including Work Integrated Learning Session (WIL)).

## **Demonstration of Adverse Circumstances**

(13) Students who submit an application for adverse circumstances affecting assessment items must be able to demonstrate that one or more of the adverse circumstances listed below may adversely impact their academic performance within the current term or the examination period:

- a. health grounds;
- b. compassionate grounds;
- c. hardship;
- d. trauma; or
- e. unavoidable commitments.

## **Approval of Adverse Circumstances Applications**

(14) Course Co-ordinators or designated officers within the Student hub are responsible for approval of applications in accordance with the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#).

## **Supporting Documentation**

(15) All documentation provided must be in English or accompanied by an English translation provided by a translator approved by the National Accredited Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI).

(16) Allowable documents are detailed in the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#) and may include:

- a. a letter or medical certificate from an accepted health professional;
- b. evidence supporting compassionate grounds;
- c. evidence supporting hardship/trauma;
- d. evidence supporting unavoidable commitments as a student Reservist, an elite sportsperson or religious responsibilities;
- e. evidence supporting jury duty or other court ordered appearance; and

- f. a Statutory Declaration. This document will only be accepted when used to demonstrate compassionate grounds, hardship or trauma and it must be provided with other supporting documentation. Statutory Declarations will not be accepted for health grounds.

(17) Students who submit an application for Adverse Circumstances are responsible for:

- a. ensuring the authenticity of any supporting documentation that they provide to the University; and
- b. retention of any supporting documentation for a period of six months after completion of the relevant term. This documentation must be produced by a student when requested to do so by the University.

(18) The University may take steps to verify the authenticity of any documentation provided with an application. This may include seeking further information from persons named in an application or in supporting documentation.

(19) Supply of false information, false or falsified documentation by a student to the University will result in the rejection of the adverse circumstances application and/or the cancellation of the adverse circumstances approval authorisation. This may result in disciplinary action under the [Student Conduct Rule](#).

## **Appeals**

(20) Students may appeal the outcome of the adverse circumstances application within 3 Working days of the outcome being determined.

(21) The appeal should be made in accordance with the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#) (Clause 40-46).

## **Section 5 - Relaxation Provision**

(22) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the President of Academic Senate may relax any provisions of this policy unless otherwise specified in the overarching Rules.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	6th July 2016
<b>Review Date</b>	31st December 2019
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	6th July 2016
<b>Expiry Date</b>	25th March 2020
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Academic Senate"** - The Academic Senate of the University as described in the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Council"** - The governing authority of the University established under section 8A of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Working day"** - Any day other than Saturday, Sunday, or a public holiday in Newcastle, on which business may be conducted.

**"Accepted health professional"** - Medical practitioners including hospital-based medical practitioners; general practitioners; specialist medical practitioners such as psychiatrists, ophthalmologists and surgeons dentists; clinical psychologists; pharmacists; social workers; accredited counsellors or members of the counselling service from Newcastle Australia Institute of Higher Education (Singapore).

**"Adverse circumstances approval authorisation"** - The email issued to the student's University of Newcastle student email account, approving an adverse circumstances request.

**"Assessment item"** - Any form of work used to measure student learning outcomes and to determine the final result for a student in a course.

**"Course"** - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Disciplinary action"** - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

**"Officer"** - Has the meaning given in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth), or any replacing legislation.

**"Student hub"** - Is located at Callaghan, Ourimbah, Newcastle and Port Macquarie or the administrative units for students enrolled at Sydney or Singapore.

**"Term"** - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the

delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Unavoidable commitments"** - Includes caring responsibilities, cultural or religious commitments, commitments within the Australian Defence Forces or similar international bodies, commitments as an elite athlete to attend an event, obligations to jury duty, or another commitment that cannot by its nature be rescheduled.