

# Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy

## Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s), including formal examinations, their ability to attend compulsory classes, or a scheduled placement.

(2) This policy must be read in conjunction with the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#), the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#), the [Supporting Students with Disability Policy](#) the [Student Professional Experience Policy](#) and the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

(3) In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and its supporting procedure and any University 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, all modes of study, locations and types of assessment items, with the exception of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program or the Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine, who should refer to the [Joint Medical Program Manual](#).

(5) Students whose ongoing circumstances which may adversely affect their performance should seek advice from their Course Coordinator, Program Convenor and support services such as the AccessAbility, the University Health Service or the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre. Students who experience ongoing chronic issues should seek a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP).

## Section 3 - Policy Intent

(6) This Policy is intended to support students who have experienced adverse circumstances, which were unforeseen and which may affect their academic performance in assessment item(s).

## Section 4 - Policy Provisions/Principles

### Lodgement of Applications

(7) Students may submit an application for adverse circumstances affecting assessment items via the online Adverse Circumstances 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. Students who submit a concerning number of applications may be referred to AccessAbility or the Counselling Service for assistance.

(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) The possible outcomes of an application for adverse circumstances affecting an assessment item are:

- a. an extension of time to submit is granted;
- b. permission to undertake an examination during the Rescheduled Examination Period;
- c. provision of an alternative assessment;
- d. rejection of application; or
- 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;
- e. cultural days or Sorry Business; or
- f. unavoidable commitments.

## **Approval of Adverse Circumstances Applications**

(14) Course Co-ordinators or designated University staff 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 an agency accepted by the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT) Pty Ltd (UAC).

(16) Allowable documents are detailed in the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#).

(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. the 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) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students may be exempt from providing supporting documentation, on cultural or compassionate grounds. In such circumstances, a nominee of the Head of Wollotuka Institute is authorised to verify the authenticity of the application.

(19) 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.

(20) 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**

(21) Students may appeal the outcome of the adverse circumstances application within three working days of the outcome being determined.

(22) The appeal should be made in accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy and the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure](#) (Clause 66-68).

## **Section 5 - Relaxing Provision**

(23) To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the President of Academic Senate may relax any provisions of this policy.

(24) Where students have been impacted by a government (state or Federal) declared natural disaster or other national or international crisis, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President may waive the requirement for the submission of adverse circumstances applications and associated documentation and may direct Student Central, Schools, Colleges or other areas of the University to put in place arrangements to support impacted students.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	30th March 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	30th June 2020
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	27th March 2020
<b>Expiry Date</b>	21st February 2024
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Mark Hoffman Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Vice President
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance <hr/> Student Central

## 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.

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 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.

**"Reasonable Adjustment Plan"** - A document developed by a student with disability and the University's AccessAbility Team which records reasonable adjustments.

**"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 is as defined in the Student Conduct Rule.

**"School"** - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

**"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.

**"College"** - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.