

# Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure

Please note Joint Medical Program (JMP) students must follow a separate procedure as outlined in the [Joint Medical Program Manual](#).

## Section 1 - Context

- (1) This procedure supports the implementation of the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#), and the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#) and must be read in conjunction with those documents.
- (2) In the event of any inconsistency between this procedure and the Policy or a University Rule, the Rule made by the Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

## Section 2 - Procedure

- (3) This procedure describes the steps to be followed when a student is seeking special consideration because adverse circumstances have had an impact on their performance in an assessment item.
- (4) Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where the:
  - a. assessment item is a major assessment item; or
  - b. assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the relevant Course Outline that students may lodge an application via the online Adverse Circumstances system; or
  - c. student is requesting a change of placement.
- (5) The supporting documentation for an application must be submitted using the online Adverse Circumstances system.
- (6) Applications with approved supporting documentation will be either:
  - a. approved by a designated University staff member; or
  - b. forwarded electronically to the Course Co-ordinator who will be responsible for determining the outcome.
- (7) When an application is rejected, the penalties described in the [Course Management and Assessment Manual](#) will apply.

### Allowable Adverse Circumstances

- (8) Students who submit an application for adverse circumstances affecting assessment items must be able to demonstrate that one or more of the following allowable adverse circumstances may adversely impact their performance:
  - a. health grounds – either physical or psychological;

- b. non-health grounds – such as:
  - i. compassionate grounds – for example, the death or serious injury of a close family member or friend;
  - ii. hardship – for example, sudden loss of employment; family breakdown; or severe disruption to domestic arrangements;
  - iii. trauma – for example, impact of crime or accident; impact of natural disasters;
  - iv. cultural days or Sorry Business; or
  - v. unavoidable commitments – for example, but not limited to, volunteer firefighters or student reservists.

(9) Adverse Circumstances do not include:

- a. misreading the Course Outline or the examination timetable;
- b. usual work commitments;
- c. travel plans;
- d. ignorance of assumed knowledge requirements for a course; or
- e. an inability to meet the inherent requirement of the program or course.

### **Requests for an Extension of Time to Submit an Assessment Item (Excluding In-class and Formal Examinations)**

(10) Students who experience adverse circumstances affecting their ability to submit an assessment item by the due date may request an extension of time for submission of the assessment item.

(11) Students must submit their adverse circumstances application via the online Adverse Circumstances system by 11:00pm on the due date of the assessment item.

(12) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in Clauses 60 to 66 of this procedure.

(13) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students seeking exemption from providing supporting documentation, particularly on cultural or compassionate grounds, are required to seek written authorisation in accordance with the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

(14) Following submission of the application and the appropriate supporting documentation the authorised University staff member will either:

- a. approve the application where there is an Allowable Adverse circumstance and the extension of time request is less than or equal to three days; or
- b. forward the application to the Course Co-ordinator (or nominee) via email for action and determination of the outcome as soon as possible and usually within three working days. Possible outcomes are listed clause 12 of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

(15) Students will be notified of the outcome of the application via email.

(16) Students who are granted an extension must attach the adverse circumstances approval authorisation email to or with the submission of the assessment item so it is apparent to the marker that an extension has been approved.

(17) Students are required to retain all supporting documentation relating to their application for a period of six months, in accordance clause 17 of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

## **Requests for a Rescheduled In-Class Examination Following Adverse Circumstances**

(18) The following clauses (19-25) relate to requests for a rescheduled in-class examination following adverse circumstances that have effected either:

- a. preparation for an in-class examination; or
- b. attendance at an in-class exam.

(19) Students who experience adverse circumstances that may have affected their preparation or ability to attend the examination may request the rescheduling of an in-class examination.

(20) Students must submit their application via the online Adverse Circumstances system by the scheduled time of the in-class examination.

(21) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in clauses 60-66 of this procedure.

(22) Following submission of the application and supporting documentation the application will be available for the Course Co-ordinator (or nominee) to view in the Adverse Circumstances system.

(23) The Course Co-ordinator (or nominee), will determine the outcome of the application as soon as possible and usually within three working days.

(24) Students will be notified of the outcome of the application via email.

(25) The Adverse Circumstances Approval Authority email issued to the student must be retained by the student for a period of six months, in accordance with clause 17 of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

## **Requests for a Rescheduled In-Class Examination Following Adverse Circumstances that have Affected a Student's Performance During an In-class Examination**

(26) Students who experience adverse circumstances during the in-class examination prior to leaving the examination room are required to advise the exam supervisor of their intention to submit an Adverse Circumstances application.

(27) Students must submit their application via the online Adverse Circumstances system as soon as possible after the scheduled in-class examination and no later than three calendar days after the in-class examination.

(28) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in clauses 60-66 of this procedure.

(29) The Course Co-ordinator will keep the student's examinations answer booklet until such time as they have assessed the Adverse Circumstances application. The application may be either:

- a. granted: an alternative examination or assessment is granted, the original examination booklet will be held unmarked until the alternative examination or alternative assessment is completed; or
- b. denied: the original examination booklet will be marked; or
- c. withdrawn by the student: the original examination booklet will be marked.

(30) When a student is granted an alternative assessment item, the final mark awarded for the assessment item will be the mark achieved in the alternative assessment item – not whichever mark is higher.

(31) Students who have attempted an in-class examination by virtue of the attendance sheet (or equivalent) are not eligible for a supplementary examination or alternative assessment item unless they comply with the requirements specified above (clauses 26 to 29).

### **Requests for a Rescheduled Examination Following Adverse Circumstances that have Affected Either Preparation for or Attendance at a Formal Examination**

(32) Students must submit their adverse circumstances application via the online Adverse Circumstances system prior to the scheduled date of the examination as listed in the Formal Examination timetable.

(33) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in clauses 60-66 of this procedure.

(34) Following lodgement of the application and on presentation and acceptance of appropriate supporting documentation the Course Co-ordinator will determine the outcome of the application.

(35) Where a student is granted a rescheduled examination, this will be scheduled by Student Central and will be held in the rescheduled examination period.

(36) Students who have been granted a rescheduled examination but are unable to sit the rescheduled examination can request a second reschedule, where:

- a. the original circumstances are ongoing; or
- b. new circumstances have arisen which were not known at the time of approval of the original rescheduled examination request.

(37) The relevant School will be responsible for organising and supervising the rescheduled examination and notifying the student.

(38) The special examination will be scheduled by the Examinations Office.

(39) Students will be advised of the outcome or progress of the application, within three working days after lodgement.

### **Requests for a Rescheduled Examination Following Adverse Circumstances that have Affected a Student's Performance During a Formal Examination**

(40) Students who experience adverse circumstances during the examination are required to indicate their intention to submit an Adverse Circumstances application to the Exam Room Supervisor prior to leaving the examination room.

(41) Students must submit their Adverse Circumstances application via the online Adverse Circumstances system as soon as possible after the examination and no later than three calendar days after the examination.

(42) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in clauses 60-66 of this procedure.

(43) The Course Co-ordinator will keep the student's examinations answer booklet until such time as they have assessed the Adverse Circumstances application. The application may be either:

- a. granted: an alternative examination or assessment is granted, the original examination booklet will be held unmarked until the alternative examination or alternative assessment is completed; or

- b. denied: the original examination booklet will be marked; or
- c. withdrawn by the student: the original examination booklet will be marked.

(44) Where an examination is scheduled for the rescheduled examination period or an alternative assessment is authorised, the final mark awarded for the assessment item will be the mark achieved in the special examination or alternative assessment – not whichever mark is higher.

(45) Students who have attempted an examination by virtue of the attendance sheet are not eligible for a rescheduled examination or alternative assessment unless they comply with the requirements specified above (clauses 40-44)

### **Request for Reschedule of Placement (including WIL)**

(46) Students who are unable to complete a placement (including WIL) due to adverse circumstances may apply for a reallocation of the placement.

(47) Students must submit their adverse circumstances application via the online Adverse Circumstances system as soon as possible after allocation of placement and no later than three days before the commencement of the placement.

(48) Students must supply the supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system within three calendar days after the submission of the online application. Appropriate supporting documentation is described in clauses 60-66 of this procedure.

(49) The adverse circumstances application will be referred to the relevant Course Co-ordinator to determine the outcome of the application.

(50) Where a student is to be granted a special placement this will be scheduled by the relevant College Placement Officers.

(51) Students will be notified via email of the outcome of the application by the Course Co-ordinator.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances**

(52) In extraordinary adverse circumstances, after all other options have been explored, the Course Co-ordinator or Head of School may recommend to the School Assessment Body that an adverse circumstances application will be taken into consideration for the determination of a final result in a course.

(53) Marks will not be modified as an outcome of these applications, but a recommendation for an alternative assessment item may be considered by the School Assessment Body.

(54) Where an examination is scheduled for the rescheduled examination period or an alternative assessment item is authorised, the final mark awarded for the assessment item will be the mark achieved in the special examination or alternative assessment – not whichever mark is higher.

(55) In extraordinary circumstances an adverse circumstances application may be referred to Campus care for advice.

### **Supporting Documentation**

(56) Students are required to submit any adverse circumstances supporting documentation online through the Adverse Circumstances system.

(57) The decision maker, whether Head of School or Course Co-ordinator (or nominee) may request a copy of the supporting documentation from the student at any time.

(58) As per clause 55 in extraordinary circumstances, and when deemed necessary for the welfare of the student, a disclosure may be made to Campus care.

(59) All documentation provided must be submitted through the Adverse Circumstances system as described in clauses 15-20 of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

(60) Students are responsible for ensuring the authenticity of any documentation that they provide to the University as described in clauses 15-20 of the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

(61) Documents translated into English will be accepted if the translation agency is accepted by the Universities Admissions Centre (NSW and ACT) Pty Ltd (UAC).

(62) Allowable supporting documentation may include:

- a. a letter or medical certificate from an accepted health professional, which should include the date(s) that the health grounds have adversely affected the relevant assessment item(s);
- b. evidence demonstrating compassionate grounds - this may include a funeral notice (both newspaper hardcopy or online digital will be accepted) or letter from a [Counselling Service](#);
- c. evidence demonstrating hardship - this may include a letter from a [Counselling Service](#);
- d. evidence demonstrating trauma - this may include a letter from a police officer, fire officer or letter from a [Counselling Service](#);
- e. evidence supporting cultural days, this may include confirmation from the Wollotuka Institute or other cultural body;
- f. evidence supporting unavoidable commitments as a student reservist, an elite sportsperson or religious responsibilities - this may include an official notification or letter from a person/s in authority such as a letter from Elite Athletes Coordinator;
- g. evidence supporting jury duty or other court ordered appearance - this may include a court subpoena;
- h. a University issued Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) if the circumstances relate to the condition covered by the Plan;
- i. a letter from a Student Support Advisor or any clinician employed by Health and Wellbeing in Student Central;  
or
- j. a Statutory Declaration. This document will only be accepted when used to demonstrate health grounds, compassionate grounds, hardship or trauma and should be provided with supporting documentation where possible.

## Appeals

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

(64) The appeal should be made in:

- a. accordance with the [Academic Appeals Policy](#); and
- b. writing via email to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar.

(65) The Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar will refer these matters to the relevant Head of School or Head of Domestic Programs for consideration and assessment. If the Head of School is also the Course Co-ordinator, the College Pro Vice-Chancellor must consider the appeal. If the Head of Domestic Programs is also the Course Co-ordinator, the Director, Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre must consider the appeal.

(66) The relevant Head of School or Head of Domestic Programs will notify the student of the outcome of the appeal,

in writing to the student's University of Newcastle email account, normally within seven working days of receipt.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	10th July 2023
<b>Review Date</b>	10th July 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	6th June 2023
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Laura-Anne Bull Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience and Academic Registrar
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Kim Austin Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"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.

**"Joint Medical Program (JMP)"** - the Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine as delivered in partnership by University of Newcastle and University of New England.

**"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.

**"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).

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

**"Assumed knowledge"** - The knowledge base upon which a course builds and which is deemed necessary at the commencement of that course to succeed in that course.

**"Calendar days"** - All days in a month including weekends and public holidays.

**"Campus care"** - The program which has been set up as a central point of enquiry for information, advice and support in managing inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviours.

**"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.

**"In-class examination"** - A quiz, test, laboratory assignment, tutorial exercise, or any other work that is undertaken in a classroom during the term and is used to measure student learning outcomes and determine the student's final result of a student in a course.

**"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.