

# Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure

## Section 1 - Context

(1) This procedure supports the implementation of the [Course Assessment and Grading 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 or delegation, the Rule made by the Council or the delegation will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

## Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This procedure describes the steps to be followed when a student is seeking special consideration because adverse circumstances have impacted their preparation, attendance or performance in an assessment item.

## Section 3 - Scope

(4) This procedure applies to:

- a. all coursework students of the University; and
- b. all modes of study, locations, and types of assessment items.

(5) This procedure does not apply to 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](#).

## Section 4 - Procedure

(6) Applications for Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items (application) will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where the:

- a. assessment item is a major assessment item (weighted at 30% or more of the overall value of the course); or
- b. assessment item is a minor assessment item (weighted at less than 30% of the overall value of the course) 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.

(7) Per Table 1, valid applications will be either:

- a. approved by a designated University staff member, where the application is for an extension of time of 3 days or less; or
- b. forwarded electronically to the Course Co-ordinator (or their nominee) who will be responsible for determining

the outcome.

(8) When an application is rejected, the penalties for late submission described in the [Course Assessment and Grading Manual](#) will apply.

## Allowable Adverse Circumstances

(9) Students who submit an application must be able to demonstrate that one or more of the allowable adverse circumstances in the [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#) may adversely impact their preparation, attendance or performance.

## Application Types and Requirements

(10) Table 1 outlines the available application types and requirements. All application types in Table 1 must have the required supporting documentation submitted in accordance with Section 5 of this Procedure, and must be submitted via the online Adverse Circumstances system.

(11) Please also refer “Extraordinary Circumstances” in Section 6.

**Table 1 - Types of Applications and Requirements**

Assessment Item Type	Impact Due to Adverse Circumstances	Application Due Date	Decision Maker	Possible Outcomes
Assessment item	Student is unable to submit an assessment item on time.	As soon as the need for an extension is identified, but no later than the due date and time of the assessment item.	Student Central (for extensions of 3 days or less) or Course Co-ordinator	Extension of time is granted; or rejection of application.
In class examination	The student is unable to adequately prepare for or attend an in-class examination.	Before the scheduled time of the in-class examination.	Course Co-ordinator or their nominee.	Alternative in-class examination or assessment is granted; or rejection of application.
	The student is unable to perform during an in-class examination.	The student must indicate their intention to apply to the Exam Supervisor, prior to leaving the examination. The application must be submitted as soon as possible after the scheduled in-class examination, and no later than 3 calendar days after the in-class examination.		Alternate in-class examination or assessment is granted; or rejection of application and original attempt is marked.
Formal examination	The student is unable to adequately prepare for or attend a formal examination.	Before the scheduled time of the formal examination.	Course Co-ordinator or their nominee.	Rescheduled examination during the Rescheduled Examination Period, or an alternative assessment is granted; or rejection of application.
	The student is unable to perform during a formal examination.	The student must indicate their intention to apply to the Exam Supervisor prior to leaving the examination. The application must be submitted as soon as possible after the scheduled formal examination, and no later than 3 calendar days after the formal examination.		Rescheduled examination or alternative assessment is granted; or rejection of application and original attempt is marked.

Assessment Item Type	Impact Due to Adverse Circumstances	Application Due Date	Decision Maker	Possible Outcomes
Placement	The student is unable to complete a placement.	As soon as possible after allocation of the placement and no later than 3 calendar days before commencement of the placement.	Course Co-ordinator or their nominee.	Special placement is granted; or rejection of application.

(12) In extenuating circumstances, and with appropriate documentation, the Course Co-ordinator may approve an application submitted after the application deadlines listed in Table 1.

(13) Students who are granted an extension for an assessment item 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.

(14) The outcome of an application will be determined as soon as possible, usually within three working days.

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

(16) For applications in relation to performance in an in-class or formal examination, the student must indicate their intention to apply to the Exam Supervisor, prior to leaving the examination. The Course Co-ordinator will not mark the original attempt until the application is assessed. Where the application is denied or withdrawn by the student the original attempt will be marked.

(17) When a student is granted a rescheduled or alternative examination or assessment item, the final mark awarded for the assessment item will be the mark achieved in a the alternative examination or assessment item.

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

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

(20) Alternative in-class examinations will be scheduled by the relevant School who will be responsible for organising and supervising the alternative in-class examination and notifying the student.

(21) Students who have been granted a rescheduled formal or alternative in-class examination but are unable to sit the rescheduled formal or alternative in-class 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.

(22) Students who have attempted an in-class or formal examination are not eligible for a rescheduled formal examination or alternative in-class examination or assessment, unless they comply with the requirements specified above.

## Section 5 - Supporting Documentation

(23) The supporting documentation for an application must be submitted using the online Adverse Circumstances system.

(24) All supporting documentation for applications 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).

(25) 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 for example, 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) that provides for the requested outcome, 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 other supporting documentation where possible.

(26) The decision maker may request a copy of the supporting documentation from the student at any time.

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

## Exemptions

(28) 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](#).

(29) Where students have been impacted by a State or Federal Government declared natural disaster, health crisis, or other national or international crisis, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) 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.

## Section 6 - Extraordinary Circumstances

(30) 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 application will be taken into consideration for the determination of a final result in a course.

(31) Where the School Assessment Body grants a rescheduled examination or alternative assessment, the final mark awarded for the course will be the mark achieved in the rescheduled examination or alternative assessment - not

whichever mark is higher.

(32) In extraordinary circumstances an application may be referred to Campus Care for advice.

## Section 7 - Appeals

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

(34) The appeal should be made in:

- a. accordance with the [Academic Appeals Policy](#); and
- b. writing via email to the Academic Division General Manager and Academic Registrar.

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

(36) 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

Status	Current
Effective Date	3rd December 2024
Review Date	22nd February 2027
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	29th November 2024
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Lisa Wood Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Lisa.Wood@newcastle.edu.au
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance <hr/> Student Central

## 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.

**"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.

**"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.

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

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"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.