

JMP - Adverse and Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure

Section 1 - Content

(1) This procedure applies only to students enrolled in the Joint Medical Program (JMP) and pertains only to courses/units with the prefix MEDI as offered by the Schools of Medicine and Public Health (UON) and Rural Medicine (UNE).

(2) This procedure should be read in conjunction with the [JMP Policy Governing the Administration of Assessment Items](#).

Section 2 - Definitions

(3) In the context of this document:

- a. “assessment item” means any form of assignment, examination, quiz, test, laboratory item, tutorial exercise or other work used:
 - i. to measure student learning outcomes; and
 - ii. to determine the final result of a student in a course/unit.
- b. “alternative / replacement assessment item” means an assessment item which provides an opportunity for the student to demonstrate learning outcomes similar to those covered by the original assessment item or examination. An oral examination may be an alternative assessment to a written examination. An alternative assessment item carries the same percentage of total weighting for the course/unit as the original assessment item’
- c. “course” at UON means any part of a program for which a result may be recorded;
- d. “Course Co-ordinator” at UON means the academic staff member responsible for the management of a particular course as approved by the JMP Committee;
- e. “documentation” means original documents or copies of originals certified as true copies by a Justice of the Peace or authorised officer of the University;
- f. “examination” means an assessment by way of a test, by oral or written questions or performance, undertaken by the student within a stated timeframe, in a designated location, or online, or on a computer identified for that purpose;
- g. “Head of School” means the Head of School of Medicine and Public Health (UON) and/or the Head of School Rural Medicine (UNE) who is responsible for the MEDI course/unit in which the assessment is undertaken;
- h. “in writing” means using a form or a paper-based document or an email, fax or other electronic document capable of being converted to hardcopy;
- i. “Joint Medical Program (JMP)” means the Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program (BMed – JMP) or Bachelor of Medical Science/Doctor of Medicine (MD – JMP); as delivered in partnership by UON and UNE;
- j. “JMP Teaching and Learning Committee” means the joint UON / UNE committee responsible from 2014 for the planning, implementation and management of the curriculum, assessment and standards of the JMP;
- k. “major assessment item” means:

- i. any assessment item, including the final examination, worth 20% or more of the final result of a course/unit; or
- ii. a compulsory assessment item that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better in that course/unit;
- l. “School” means the School of Medicine and Public Health at the University of Newcastle and the School of Rural Medicine at the University of New England;
- m. “supplementary assessment item” means an assessment item similar in weight, nature and content to the original assessment item, unless otherwise approved by the Head of School;
- n. “unit” at UNE means any part of a program for which a result may be recorded;
- o. “Unit Coordinator” at UNE means the academic staff member responsible for the management of a particular unit, as approved by the JMP Committee.
- p. “Year Assessment Decision Committee” means the committees responsible for recommending final grades to the Heads of School and for reviewing the assessment of courses / units in accordance with the Universities’ quality assurance principles.

Section 3 - Procedure - MEDI Courses/Units

(4) In relation to MEDI courses/units, JMP students are entitled to apply for consideration of the impact of certain circumstances on their performance in assessment subject to the following provisions:

Identifying what may be Adverse or Special Circumstances

(5) Allowable adverse or special circumstances may include one or more of the following:

- a. medical and psychological grounds (NB. where these grounds are based on a long term disability or medical condition, evidence of an acute or aggravated episode affecting a particular assessment item is required);
- b. compassionate grounds – for example the death or serious injury of a close family member or close friend;
- c. hardship or trauma – for example sudden loss of employment; family breakdown; severe disruption to domestic arrangements; impact of crime or accident; impact of natural disasters;
- d. unavoidable commitments within the term and/or exam period – e.g., cultural or religious commitments; commitments as a student Reservist within the Australian Defence Forces or as an elite athlete; and/or jury duty or other court appearances.

(6) Some situations that do not constitute allowable circumstances include: misreading the course/unit outline or examination timetable; having travel bookings for holidays; returning home; regular work commitments, or early commencement of holiday employment.

(7) This procedure does not cover the ongoing accommodation / assistance provided by the Disability Support Service to assist students with a disability to undertake study or exams.

Options for consideration of circumstances that have affected assessment

(8) JMP students may be entitled to apply for one of the following:

- a. rescheduled examination where:
 - i. circumstances (as defined in Clauses 5-7 above) prevent the student from attempting an examination on the scheduled date; and
 - ii. the rescheduled examination date falls within the same formal examination period;
- b. an extension of time beyond the published due date for the submission, presentation or performance of an

assessment item where circumstances have affected the student's ability to meet the deadline;

c. special consideration where circumstances:

- i. affect an assessment item, particularly an examination; and/or
- ii. affected or disadvantaged their preparation or performance in an assessment item they had attempted;
or
- iii. affected or disadvantaged their performance in a number of the assessment items they had attempted in a course/unit.

(9) Except in exceptional cases, as approved by the relevant Head of School, a JMP student will be able to apply for consideration of adverse or special circumstances on only one occasion for a particular assessment item.

(10) A JMP student whose application for a rescheduled examination, extension of time or special consideration is approved, will be eligible for the full range of marks available for the assessment item and/or the full range of grades available for the course/unit.

Part A - MINOR Assessment Item - procedure

(11) Where circumstances affect a JMP student's performance in an assessment item that is not a major assessment item (refer Section 2 'Definitions', above) the student must apply in writing – preferably by email - to the Course/Unit Coordinator and seek the appropriate consideration, e.g. an extension of time on an assessment item, rescheduling of a class test or special consideration of the impact of circumstances on their performance. The Course/Unit Coordinator may request further information to substantiate the request.

(12) The Course/Unit Coordinator is responsible for:

- a. evaluating the request;
- b. providing a response in writing (preferably by email) to the student;
- c. recording the application and outcome; and
- d. maintaining a record of all applications and outcomes;
- e. submitting the record of all applications and outcomes to the JMP Medical Education Support Officer at the end of each semester.

Minor Assessment Item - Outcomes of Applications

(13) Where a JMP student seeks an extension of time on an assessment item or the rescheduling of a class test, the Course/Unit Coordinator will respond in writing preferably by email – advising the student of:

- a. the additional time allowed for submitting the item; or
- b. the arrangements for undertaking the exam/test.

(14) Where a JMP student seeks special consideration of their performance in an assessment item, the Course/Unit Coordinator may offer one of the following responses:

- a. the result for the assessment item remains unchanged; or
- b. the student is offered an alternative or replacement assessment item – the result of which will be the recorded mark for the item; or
- c. the circumstances are noted with a view to reviewing the result in the light of further evidence, after which, one of the two responses listed as (a) or (b) will be provided.

(15) N.B. special consideration does not provide for awarding of additional marks for an assessment.

(16) Where a JMP student wishes to appeal the decision of the Course/Unit Coordinator, an appeal should be lodged in writing – preferably by email – to the relevant Head of School.

(17) The remainder of this Procedure applies to MAJOR Assessment Items.

Part B - MAJOR Assessment Item - procedure

(18) Where circumstances affect a JMP student's performance in a major assessment item, students may apply for either:

- a. a Rescheduled Examination (apply up to ten (10) calendar days before the date examination/assessment item date); or
- b. an Extension of Time to submit (apply up to the day the assessment item is due – DOES NOT APPLY to examinations); or
- c. a Supplementary assessment where the original assessment item was not attended/completed due to the adverse or special circumstances,(apply within three calendar days of the due date of the assessment); or
- d. Special Consideration (apply within three calendar days of the date of any assessment affected. If more than one assessment is affected under this category, students should apply once for each assessment item affected, and within three calendar days of each due date).

(19) To make application for any of these provisions the following procedures must be followed.

(20) Students at UON must:

- a. apply using the UON online [Adverse Circumstances](#) page;
- b. gather the required supporting documentation (refer Clauses 23-26);
- c. submit supporting documentation online through the UON online [Adverse Circumstances](#) system within three calendar days of the submission of the initial application.

(21) Students at UNE must:

- a. apply using the [JMP Adverse and Special Circumstances application](#);
- b. gather the required supporting documentation (refer Clauses 23 to 26 below); and
- c. submit the application with supporting documentation as scanned attachments through AskUNE or by fax to Student Central on 02 6773 4400.

(22) The application is not completed until all documentation is submitted, at UON via the Adverse Circumstances system and at UNE, to AskUNE or Student Central.

DOCUMENTATION - to support applications when circumstances affect a Major Assessment Item

(23) All applications must include documentation.

(24) Note: Documents provided must be in the form of original documents, or certified copies of the original, as specified in Section 2 'Definitions - documentation', above.

(25) Students applying on medical, including psychological, grounds must submit a medical certificate, completed by a registered medical or dental practitioner or other appropriate professional. The certificate should state:

- a. the date on which the practitioner examined the student; and

- b. the severity of the condition; and
- c. the likely period of impact on the student.

(26) Students applying on other grounds must submit suitable documentary evidence. Note that a statutory declaration is not sufficient documentation for any grounds on its own. For appeals based on:

- a. compassionate grounds - supporting evidence may include a medical certificate or letter from a counsellor, or doctor, a funeral notice, and a statutory declaration;
- b. hardship/trauma - supporting evidence may include a medical certificate or a letter from a counsellor or doctor, a police officer or fire officer, and a statutory declaration, depending on the nature of the issue;
- c. unavoidable commitments during the semester - supporting evidence should include documents relating to the commitment, and a statutory declaration; and
- d. commitments as a Student Reservist - refer to the UON [Student Reservist Support Procedure](#) for details of appropriate documentation.

RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS - (Major Assessment Items Only) - How to apply

(27) Applications for a rescheduled examination in the same formal exam period on the basis of religious, medical, compassionate or other grounds which:

- a. prevent a student from attending, or completing an examination, or
- b. adversely affect their preparation for the examination.

(28) Must be made according to the process specified in Clauses 18 to 22, no later than ten calendar days prior to the first date of the examination period.

(29) Applications must be accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence (see Clauses 23 to 26) and submitted according to the process specified in Clauses 18 to 22 above.

RESCHEDULED EXAMINATION - application outcomes

(30) A student applying for a rescheduled examination will be notified of the outcome by the Year Manager.

(31) Where the outcome is to provide a rescheduled examination, the date of the rescheduled examination will be notified by the Year Manager.

EXTENSION OF TIME ON AN ASSESSMENT ITEM (Major Assessment (non-Examination) Items Only) - How to apply

(32) Applications for an extension of time on assessment items must be made according to the process specified in Clauses 18 to 22.

(33) Applications are not finalised until appropriate documentation, as outlined in Clauses 23 to 26 above, is submitted to a Student Hub online (UON) or the AskUNE or Student Central (UNE) prior to the due date of the item.

(34) In their application, students must nominate:

- a. how long an extension of time they require; and
- b. the new due date that the assessment will be submitted.

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION - how to apply

(35) If circumstances arise after the cut-off date for seeking a rescheduled examination (i.e., ten calendar days prior to

the first date of the examination period) that:

- a. prevent a student from attending, or completing an examination, or
- b. adversely affect their performance at the examination,

(36) An application for a supplementary examination must be submitted under the category of Special Consideration, no later than three calendar days after the date of the examination (refer to Clause 45).

SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION - application outcomes

(37) An application for a supplementary examination will be assessed jointly by the Course/Unit Coordinators. Any supplementary examination arranged will usually be held in the Supplementary Examination Period immediately following the Formal Examination period.

(38) Where the Course/Unit Coordinators jointly recommend a supplementary examination, the Year Manager will advise the students of the outcome of the application and the date and venue of the supplementary examination.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION - how to apply (Major Assessment Items Only)

(39) Students may apply for consideration of the impact of adverse or special circumstances on their performance:

- a. during an exam/on an assessment item; or
- b. across a number of exams/assessment items in a course/unit.

(40) Requests for Special Consideration must be made according to the on-line process specified in Clause 18 (d) above as soon as possible after the examination/assessment and no later than three (3) calendar days after the date of submission for the assessment item, or the date of the examination. Supporting documentation as specified in Clause 18 (d) and 19 above must be submitted within 3 calendar days following submission of the online application.

(41) Students must retain a copy of their application.

(42) The JMP Year Assessment Decision Committee will:

- a. consider the application;
- b. if necessary, request more documentation**; and
- c. make a determination on the application for special consideration.

(43) **It should be noted that the JMP Year Assessment Decision Committee is under no obligation to request additional documentation, and it is the student's responsibility to provide sufficient supporting evidence for their application when it is made.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION - application outcomes

(44) For applications for special consideration of an assessment item the JMP Year Assessment Decision Committee will recommend one of the following options that:

- a. the application not be accepted because of timing or inadequate documentation; or
- b. the result for the assessment item remain unchanged; or
- c. the student be granted withdrawal without failure from the course/unit on compassionate grounds; or
- d. an alternative or supplementary assessment item be provided; or
- e. the application be noted with a view to reviewing the result in the light of subsequent evidence and at that time recommending (b),(c) or (d) above.

Notification of Outcomes

(45) Students will be informed by email of the outcome of Applications for Special Consideration:

- a. at UON by the Student Hub; and
- b. at UNE by the Year Manager.

Section 4 - Retention of Records and Confidentiality

(46) The application for consideration of circumstances affecting performance in assessment and attached documents will be treated as personal information.

(47) Officers of the Universities will comply with the Universities' Privacy requirements, along with relevant anti-discrimination and privacy legislation in the handling of applications.

(48) Any documentation relating to an application will be retained for a minimum of three (3) years.

Section 5 - Appeal Process

(49) An appeal against a decision regarding an application to address the impact of circumstances on a particular assessment item will not be allowed until the final result for the course/unit is available.

(50) An appeal against a final result based on a decision regarding an application to address the impact of adverse or special circumstances on an assessment item, must be lodged in writing under the [JMP Appeal Against Final Result Procedure](#). The appeal will follow the procedure set out in that document.

Section 6 - Reporting on Outcomes of Applications for Addressing Adverse or Special Circumstances

(51) At the beginning of each year the Year Managers will provide an annual report to the JMP Teaching and Learning Committee on applications regarding major assessment items. That report will identify the number of applications, under which categories they fall and the outcomes.

(52) At UON, at the beginning of each year the School of Medicine and Public Health will provide a similar annual report to the Pro Vice-Chancellor Faculty of Health and Medicine on applications from students in the JMP, regarding major assessment items. The report will identify the number of applications, under which categories they fall and the outcomes.

(53) The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Health and Medicine will report to the first meeting of Academic Senate every year on the number of applications, under which categories they fall and the outcomes for the previous year. The report will include an assessment of the procedures used.

Section 7 - Procedure - Non-MEDI Courses/Units

(54) Consideration of adverse circumstances for elective courses/units will be processed in accordance with the following policies;

(55) At UNE:

- a. For an examination or assignment the [Assessment Rule](#) and Procedures:
 - i. Application for an examination - UNE Application for Special Consideration;
 - ii. Application for an assignment: UNE Application for Special Extension of Time.

(56) At UON:

- a. For an examination or assignment - [Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy](#).

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	23rd October 2019
Review Date	23rd October 2022
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	3rd December 2008
Expiry Date	31st December 2020
Responsible Executive	Belinda Tynan Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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