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 how student may seek special consideration due to circumstances which adversely affect their preparation, attendance or performance in assessment item(s).

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This procedure applies to:

a. all coursework students of the University, except for students in the Joint Medical Program; and
b. all modes of study, locations of study, and types of assessment items.

(5) Students in the Joint Medical Program 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:

a. the relevant assessment item is a major assessment item (weighted at 30% or more of the overall value of the course) or formal examination; or
b. the relevant 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 nominated for applications to be submitted via the online Adverse Circumstances system; or
c. the student is requesting:
    i. an exemption from a compulsory attendance requirement; or
    ii. a rescheduled or reallocated placement (including Work Integrated Learning (WIL)).

(7) For minor assessment items where clause 6(b) does not apply, requests will be made directly to the Course Co-ordinator via email.

(8) Valid applications:

a. may be approved automatically, where the application is for an extension of time of 3 days or less and the Course Co-ordinator has enabled automatic approval; or
b. will be assigned to the Course Co-ordinator who is responsible for determining the outcome.

(9) In the event an application is rejected, the penalties for late submission described in the Course Assessment and Grading Manual will apply.

Allowable Adverse Circumstances

(10) Students who submit an application must 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

(11) Table 1 outlines the available application types and requirements.

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

Table 1 – Types of Applications and Requirements

Application Type	Impact	Application Due Date	Decision Maker	Possible Outcomes
Assessment item	The student is unable to submit an assessment item by it’s due date and time.	As soon as the need for an extension is identified, but no later than the due date and time of the assessment item.	Automatic approval(for extensions of 3 days or less, where enabled by the Course Co-ordinator)	An extension of time (of 3 days or less) is granted.
			Course Co-ordinator	An extension of time is granted; or the application is rejected.
		Applications submitted after the due date and time of the assessment item.	Course Co-ordinator	An extension of time is granted; or the application is rejected.
In class test or assessment item	The student is unable to adequately prepare for or attend an in-class test or assessment item.	Before the scheduled time of the in-class examination.	Course Co-ordinator	A rescheduled time for the in-class test or assessment item is granted; or the application is rejected.
	The student is unable to perform during an in-class test or assessment item.	The application must be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than 3 calendar days after the in-class test or assessment item.		A rescheduled time for the in-class test or assessment item is granted; or the application is rejected and the student’s original attempt is marked.

Application Type	Impact	Application Due Date	Decision Maker	Possible Outcomes
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	A rescheduled examination or alternative assessment is granted; or the application is rejected.
	The student is unable to perform during a formal examination.	The student must indicate their intention to apply for adverse circumstances 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.		A rescheduled examination or alternative assessment is granted; or the application is rejected and the student's original attempt is marked.
Compulsory attendance	The student is unable to attend a specific activity where attendance is compulsory.	The application must be submitted as soon as possible, and no later than 3 calendar days after the activity.	Course Co-ordinator	The student is exempted from compulsory attendance and/or a rescheduled time for the activity is granted; or the application is rejected.
	The student is unable to satisfy an overall attendance requirement for a course (eg. 80% attendance in 1000-level courses).	The application must be submitted no later than the final teaching day for the relevant term.	Course Co-ordinator	The student is exempted from compulsory attendance; or the application is rejected.
Placement	The student is unable to complete a placement as allocated.	As soon as possible after allocation of the placement and no later than 3 calendar days before commencement of the placement.	Course Co-ordinator	A rescheduled or reallocated placement is granted; or the application is rejected.

(13) In cases where a student's circumstances have prevented them from submitting an application in accordance with the deadlines listed in Table 1, the student may submit a late application. Late applications must include an explanation for why the application deadline could not be met, with appropriate supporting documentation.

(14) The outcome of an application will be determined as soon as possible, usually within three working days. Applications that remain outstanding after three working days will be escalated to the Head of School to coordinate an outcome.

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

(16) For applications in relation to performance in a formal examination, the Course Co-ordinator will not mark the original attempt until the application is assessed. Where the application is rejected, or is withdrawn by the student, the original attempt will be marked.

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

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

(20) Rescheduled in-class tests or assessment items will be scheduled by the relevant School who will be responsible for organising and supervising the alternative in-class test or assessment item and notifying the student.

(21) Students who have been granted a rescheduled in-class test or assessment item, or a rescheduled formal examination, can request a second reschedule where:

a. the original circumstances are ongoing; or
b. new circumstances have arisen since the time of the original application.

Section 5 - Supporting Documentation

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

(23) 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.

(24) The delegate may request a copy of the supporting documentation from the student at any time.

Exemptions

(25) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students seeking exemption from providing supporting documentation, particularly on cultural or compassionate grounds, must obtain written authorisation for this exemption in accordance with the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy.

Section 6 - Extraordinary Circumstances

(26) In extraordinary circumstances, after all other options have been explored, the Course Co-ordinator 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.

(27) Where the circumstances outlined in an application raise concern for a student's wellbeing or safety, the Course Co-ordinator or Head of School may make a referral to Campus Care.

Section 7 - Appeals

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

(29) The appeal must be made in:

a. accordance with the Academic Appeals Policy; and
b. writing via email to the Academic Registar.

(30) The Academic Registar must refer appeals to the relevant Head of School or Head of Domestic Programs in the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre for consideration and assessment.

(31) 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.

(32) The relevant Head of School or Head of Domestic Programs is responsible for notifying 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.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Policy Library for the latest version.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	9th December 2025
Review Date	9th December 2028
Approval Authority	Academic Senate
Approval Date	25th November 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	John Radvan Senior Manager, Academic Governance & Compliance 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.

"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.

"Delegate" - (noun) refers to a person occupying a position that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority, or a committee or body that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority.

This document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of the individual reading this document to always refer to the Policy Library for the latest version.