



Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy

TRIM: D12/90597P

1. Introduction

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the possible impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s), including formal examinations.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the Rules Governing Courses and Assessment [000996], Course Management Policy [000994], Assessment Policy [000995], Course Management and Assessment Procedure Manual [000996], the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure [000940], the Students with a Disability Policy [000344] and the Student Placement Policy [000768].

In the event of any inconsistency between this policy and its supporting procedure or the Rule, the Rule made by the Council prevails to the extent of the inconsistency.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to all coursework students of the University, including all modes of study, locations and types of assessment items; except to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine – Joint Medical Program refer to: Bachelor of Medicine - JMP Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - 000880.

Students whose ongoing circumstances may adversely affect their performance should seek advice from their Course Coordinator and support services such as the Disability Support Service, the University Health Service or the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

3. Policy Intent

This Policy is intended to support students who are suffering from adverse circumstances, as described, which were unforeseen and which may affect their academic performance in assessment item(s) as described in the by Rules Governing Courses and Assessment [000996].

4. Relevant Definitions

In the context of this document:

accepted health professionals means medical practitioners including hospital-based medical practitioners; general practitioners; specialist medical practitioners such as psychiatrists, ophthalmologists and surgeons; dentists; clinical psychologists; social workers, accredited counsellors or members of the counselling service from PSB Singapore;

assessment item includes an assignment, examination, quiz, test, laboratory assignment, tutorial exercise or any other work used to measure student learning outcomes, by which the final result in a course is determined. For the purposes of this policy *assessment items* have been classified as either:

- i. **Major assessment items** that have a weighting greater than or equal to 20% of the final result; or
- ii. **Minor assessments** minor that have a weighting less than 20% of the final result.

adverse circumstances approval authorisation means the email issued to the student's University of Newcastle student email account, approving an adverse circumstances request;

alternative assessment item means an assessment item administered to a student as a substitute for an assessment item for which adverse circumstances approval has been granted. Under usual circumstances a supplementary assessment item will be similar in weight, nature and content to the original assessment item, unless otherwise approved by the Head of School;

calendar days means all days in a month including weekends and public holidays;

campus care means the Campus Care program which has been set up as a central point of enquiry for information, advice and support in managing inappropriate, concerning or threatening behaviours;

due date means the date specified in the course outline when an assessment item is to be submitted for marking or another date that may be set by the Course Coordinator

examination means an assessment by way of a test by oral or written questions, undertaken by the student within a stated time frame and in a designated location, or online, or on a computer identified for that purpose;

formal examination period means the period at the end of each teaching term set aside in the University's calendar for assessment by way of examination;

in-class examination – means quiz, test, laboratory assignment, tutorial exercise or any other work used to measure student learning outcomes, by which the final result of a student in a course is determined that is undertaken in a classroom during the term;

online application system means the online system provided by the University to support Adverse Circumstances applications;

student hub means Student Hub located at Callaghan, Ourimbah, Newcastle and Port Macquarie or the administrative units for students enrolled at Sydney, Singapore or via GradSchool.com

special examinations period means the scheduled period prescribed in the Rules that will occur at the end of a term for additional examinations that may need to be conducted outside of the formal examination period as a consequence of adverse circumstances;

supplementary assessment item means an assessment item administered to a student in respect of whom any doubt exists as to the judgement to be recorded in a return for any assessment item. Under normal circumstances a supplementary assessment item will be similar in weight, nature and content to the original assessment item, unless otherwise approved by the Head of School; (Admin note: this was a definition extracted from the Rule – proposed amendments to Rule incorporate this in a new clause 17 (iii))

term means a period of time for the delivery of a course. Terms include semesters, trimesters, summer terms etc;

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 their nature be rescheduled*;

working days means all days in a month excluding weekends and gazetted public holidays.

5. Policy provisions / principles

5.1 Lodgement of Applications

5.1.1 All students have the right to submit an application for adverse circumstances affecting assessment items via the online application system. The University reserves the right to determine if an adverse circumstances application should be considered and any subsequent actions to be taken.

5.2 Determinations

5.2.1 Each application will be assessed on its merits and a previous application will not prejudice a subsequent application.

5.2.2 The University may audit the number of applications made by a student and the courses affected.

5.2.3 The University reserves the right to determine the deadline for submission of an Adverse Circumstances application

5.3 Storage of Information

5.3.1 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 and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

5.4 Outcomes

5.4.1 Possible outcomes of an application for adverse circumstances affecting an assessment item:

- i. granted an extension of time to submit;
- ii. permitted to undertake an examination during the Special Examination Period;
- iii. provided with an alternative assessment; or
- iv. rejection of application;
- v. reschedule of a placement (including Work Integrated Learning Session (WIL)).

5.5 Demonstration of Adverse Circumstances

5.5.1 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:

- i. health grounds;
- ii. compassionate grounds;
- iii. hardship;
- iv. trauma; or
- v. unavoidable commitments.

5.6 Approval of Adverse Circumstances Applications

5.6.1 Course Coordinators or designated officers within the Student Hub are responsible for approval of applications in accordance with the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure [000940].

5.7 Supporting Documentation

5.7.1 All documentation provided must be in English or accompanied by an English translation provided by a translator approved by the National Accredited Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd (NAATI).

5.7.2 Allowable documents are detailed in the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure [000940] and may include:

- i. a letter or medical certificate from an accepted health professional;
- ii. evidence supporting compassionate grounds;
- iii. evidence supporting hardship/trauma;
- iv. evidence supporting unavoidable commitments as a student Reservist, an elite sportsperson or religious responsibilities;
- v. evidence supporting jury duty or other court ordered appearance; and
- vi. a Statutory Declaration. This document will only be accepted when used to demonstrate compassionate grounds, hardship or trauma and it must be provided with other

supporting documentation. **Statutory Declarations will not be accepted for health grounds.**

5.7.3 Students who submit an application for Adverse Circumstances are responsible for:

- i. ensuring the authenticity of any supporting documentation that they provide to the University; and
- ii. 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.

5.7.4 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.

5.7.5 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 [000935].

5.8 Appeals

5.8.1 Students may appeal the outcome of the adverse circumstances application within 3 working days of the outcome being determined.

5.8.2 The appeal should be made in accordance with the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure [000940] (Clause 3.7).

6. Relaxation Provision

To provide for exceptional circumstances arising in any particular case, the President of Academic Senate may relax any provisions of this policy unless otherwise specified in the overarching Rules.

7. Essential Supporting Documents

[Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure 000940](#)

[Students with a Disability Policy 000344](#)

[Student Reservist Support Procedure 000852](#)

[Rules Governing Courses and Assessment 000993](#)

[Course Management and Assessment Procedure Manual 000996](#)

8. Related Documents

[Student Conduct Rule 000935](#)

ADMINISTRATION

For further information, please contact:

Name	Position	Contact details
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Approval authority

Approved by	Academic Senate
Policy owner	Academic Registrar

Approval – This Revision

Amendments	Academic Senate approved the online submission of documents and therefore document certification no longer required. UoN staff can request to sight the original documentation. Senate approved the deletion of the certified documents definition and an amendment to clause 5.7.
Approved by	Academic Senate
Date approved	6 July 2016
Date for review	6 July 2019
Policy owner	Academic Registrar
Policy contact	Manager, Academic Policy and Governance

Review History

No.	Effective Date	Approved by	Amendment
	8 April 2014		The Rules Governing the Administration of Assessment Items [000113] was superseded by the Rules Governing Courses and Assessment [000996], Course Management Policy [000994], Assessment Policy [000995], Course Management and Assessment Procedure Manual [000996] on 1 January 2014. References to 000113 have been replaced by the Policy Team and updated to include relevant references to the new Courses and Assessment Policy Suite.
2	18 April 2012	President of Academic	Minor amendments including the inclusion of caring responsibilities under unavoidable commitments and the inclusion of point v. under 5.4.1.
	5 January 2012		Removal of links to rescinded policy documents Course Outlines Policy 00587 and Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment items Procedure 000641.
	5 August 2011	President of Academic	Minor typographical amendments approved by President of Academic, under delegated authority - does not change intent of any clause.
	September 2011		Administrative amendments due to implementation of Student Misconduct Rule which replaced Student Discipline Rules effective 25 July 2011.

Uncontrolled if printed. Refer to the UON Policy Library website for current version.

1	8 June 2011	Academic Senate	Approved, Academic Senate, for implementation from 1 January 2012 (AS11:086).
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