



Special Circumstances Policy & Procedure

Core Documentation Cover Page

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Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)	
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)	X
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)	

If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY & PROCEDURE

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This document records the University College of Osteopathy's (UCO) policy and procedure regarding the reporting and documenting of Special Circumstances that students believe have had a significant adverse effect on their continuous academic performance or their performance in specific examinations.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Examination and In-Course Assessment Regulations.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 If you experience serious events that have a significant adverse effect on your ability to study or undertake an assessment, you may report them as Special Circumstances.
- 2.2 Special Circumstances may be taken into consideration by Boards of Examiners when final assessment results are considered.
- 2.3 The Examination Board can only give limited weight to information about Special Circumstances. Nevertheless, if you believe that you have studied a unit effectively but that Special Circumstances have had a serious adverse effect on your continuous performance or performance in an examination, you may bring this information to the attention of the Board of Examiners.

3. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 3.1 Only Special Circumstances reported through the proper procedure (see below) may be taken into account. They will also only be taken into consideration in the case of borderline fails (Grade E+) and only for serious and exceptional circumstances, which include:
 - a) Serious personal injury, such as a broken limb, or a medical condition requiring hospital attention or one with an incapacitating effect.
 - b) An acute, chronic or severe debilitating illness such that a reasonable person would have been unable to carry out the assessment task required.
 - c) Being a victim of a serious crime, such as robbery, burglary or a violent assault during the period immediately preceding assessment.
 - d) The serious illness or death of a close relative or dependent: normally a partner, parent, child or sibling.
 - e) Birth of a baby and/or unforeseen pregnancy complications.
 - f) This list is not exhaustive.
- 3.2 Events that are not normally considered as Special Circumstances include:
 - a) The death or illness of a distant relative.
 - b) Cases where medical certificates are retrospective, i.e. dated/issued after you have recovered from the illness claimed.
 - c) Normal pregnancy.

- d) English as a second language.
 - e) Dyslexia or other learning disability.
 - f) Financial problems, including payment of fees to the UCO.
 - g) Difficulties with housing or planned house moves.
 - h) Difficulties with baby-sitters, child-minders.
 - i) Transport difficulties such as public transport strikes, road works or private transport breakdowns.
 - j) Confusion over time, date location of the examination, or assignment hand-in date on the part of the candidate when this has been clearly notified, and not posed any problem to other students in the group.
 - k) Work pressure.
 - l) Computer problems such as viruses, disk corruption, printer problems, network problems, failure of computer equipment.
 - m) Problems with receiving referral work details.
 - n) Problems submitting an assignment to the designated place by the specified deadline.
 - o) Difficulties with collecting data for an assignment.
 - p) Any claim not supported by evidence which is independent and reliable.
 - q) This list is not exhaustive.
- 3.3 The decision of the Examination Board regarding whether or not your Special Circumstances are taken into consideration regarding progression is final.

4. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- 4.1 To submit Special Circumstances that have affected your performance in an examination or the revision period (three weeks) leading up to an examination or that have affected your continuous performance (i.e. significant adverse events that are ongoing and may affect submission of coursework / assignments) you must:
- 4.2 Obtain Form SC1 (Appendix 1) from the Registry Department or download this form from the Intranet (http://intranet.uco.ac.uk/policies_and_procedures/).
- 4.3 Read the instructions on the form carefully, complete the form in full and collect the relevant documentary evidence (any notes on examination scripts to examiners will be disregarded).
- 4.4 Return the completed form and documentary evidence to the Academic Registrar (either in person or electronically (email: registry@uco.ac.uk)). Special circumstances relating to an examination must be submitted no later than seven days after the examination. Special circumstances relating to a piece of coursework/assignment must be submitted no later than seven days after the hand-in deadline. You will be provided with a hand written or emailed receipt acknowledging your submission of Special Circumstances. Please keep this receipt.

5. APPLYING FOR A COURSEWORK EXTENSION

- 5.1 If your circumstances are such that you have lost a significant amount of time in the three weeks leading up to a coursework deadline, you may apply for an extension.
- 5.2 To apply for an extension you should submit a Special Circumstances form and accompanying documentation as detailed in Section 4. You should state in your request how long an extension you would like. Extensions are normally for a maximum of two weeks.
- 5.3 The Academic Registrar and appropriate Unit Leader will consider your request and inform you by email whether or not an extension has been agreed.
- 5.4 No application for a coursework extension will normally be considered on the day of the submission deadline.

6. APPLYING FOR AN EXAMINATION OR COURSEWORK DEFERRAL

- 6.1 If your circumstances are such that you have lost a significant amount of time in the three weeks leading up to a written or practical examination or coursework deadline, or if you are unable to take a written or practical examination, you may apply for a deferral.
- 6.2 To apply for an examination/coursework deferral you should submit a Special Circumstances form and accompanying documentation as detailed in Section 4.
- 6.3 The Academic Registrar and appropriate Unit Leader will consider your request and inform you by email whether or not a deferral has been agreed.
- 6.4 All deferred assessments are normally taken at the next opportunity (usually as part of the resit programme).

7. COMMUNICATING SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES TO BOARDS OF EXAMINERS

- 7.1 The details of your Special Circumstances will only be released to the Board of Examiners with your permission (evidenced by your signature agreeing to this on form SC1).
- 7.2 Boards of Examiners are normally notified that you have submitted Special Circumstances with a note of "SC" next to your name on final results spreadsheets.

8. RETAINING SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FORMS & DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

- 8.1 Special Circumstances forms and documentary evidence will be kept in a separate confidential file within the Registry Department for the duration of the academic year.
- 8.2 Special Circumstances forms and documentary evidence will be transferred to your confidential student file once the final results of all assessments for the academic year have been agreed by the Board of Examiners. You should inform the Academic Registrar of any Special Circumstances which continue into the following academic year.
- 8.3 You are recommended to keep a copy of all Special Circumstances forms and documentary evidence that you submit.

APPENDIX 1: FORM SC1 (SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FORM)

Instructions for Completing Form SC1

This form should be used only to inform the UCO of serious circumstances occurring in the three weeks up to and including an examination/coursework submission deadline that have adversely affected your examination performance/ability to submit a piece of coursework.

These include:

- a) Serious personal injury, such as a broken limb, or a medical condition requiring hospital attention or one with an incapacitating effect.
- b) An acute, chronic or severe debilitating illness such that a reasonable person would have been unable to carry out the assessment task required.
- c) Being a victim of a serious crime, such as robbery, burglary or a violent assault during the period immediately preceding assessment.
- d) The serious illness or death of a close relative or dependent: normally a partner, parent, child or sibling.
- e) Birth of a baby and/or unforeseen pregnancy complications.
- f) This list is not exhaustive.

Circumstances that **are not** considered so serious and for which you **should not** submit Form SC1 include:

- a) The death or illness of a distant relative.
- b) Cases where medical certificates are retrospective, i.e. dated/issued after you have recovered from the illness claimed.
- c) Normal pregnancy.
- d) English as a second language.
- e) Dyslexia or other learning disability.
- f) Financial problems, including payment of fees to the UCO.
- g) Difficulties with housing or planned house moves.
- h) Difficulties with baby-sitters, child-minders.
- i) Transport difficulties such as public transport strikes, road works or private transport breakdowns.
- j) Confusion over time, date location of the examination, or assignment hand-in date on the part of the candidate when this has been clearly notified, and not posed any problem to other students in the group.

- k) Work pressure.
- l) Computer problems such as viruses, disk corruption, printer problems, network problems, failure of computer equipment.
- m) Problems with receiving referral work details.
- n) Problems submitting an assignment to the designated place by the specified deadline.
- o) Difficulties with collecting data for an assignment.
- p) Any claim not supported by evidence which is independent and reliable.
- q) This list is not exhaustive.

Even when special circumstances have adversely affected your revision or your performance in an examination, the weight that the Board of Examiners can give them is limited. Cases that have little substance or that warrant little or no weight are unhelpful to you, to other students who have suffered severe circumstances, and to the UCO.

Please consider very carefully whether your case merits attention before completing the form.

Enter the details of **one** assessment affected only on this form.

Give brief and precise information about how your assessment performance has been affected.

When you submit this form you must enclose / attach corroborating documentary evidence. If this is not immediately available, please explain why on the form, and send it on as soon as possible.

Special Circumstances not supported by documentary evidence will not be considered.

You will be handed/emailed a receipt on your submission of this form. Please keep this as proof of submission.

The form must arrive no later than seven days after the examination/coursework deadline concerned. Forms that arrive later will not be accepted except at the discretion of the UCO.



University College of Osteopathy

Special Circumstances Policy & Procedure Form SC1

Name:			
Candidate Number:			
Course & Year of Study:			
Assessment Affected:			
Date of Assessment Affected:			
The serious Special Circumstances that adversely affected my examination/assessment performance were:			
Type of documentary evidence attached:			
I wish the above information to be made available to the Board of Examiners.			
Signature:		Date:	