

Special Circumstances FAQs

When should I submit special circumstances?

If you have medical/personal circumstances that may have affected your academic performance, then you should submit special circumstances. Examples include but are not limited to:

- short or long-term illness;
- severe financial problems;
- major accommodation problems;
- bereavement;
- or other compassionate grounds.

What are not considered to be special circumstances?

The following list are not considered to be special circumstances:

- Problems with computers;
- lack of access to resources;
- multiple deadlines on the same day;
- struggling with academic material;
- participation in departmental activities such as crisis games, performance productions, or study trips;
- non-academic activities, this includes any part time work you may have outside of university.

How do I submit special circumstances?

You should complete the form, that can be found

here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/specialcircumstances/Special-Circumstances-Form-2021-22.docx> and forward the completed form with all relevant evidence to the departments in which you are taking modules.

A list of Department Contacts can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/stafflist/>

What type of evidence will I need to provide to support my special circumstances?

You should submit independent documentary evidence wherever possible. All evidence must be relevant to the date of the assessment(s). Acceptable documentary evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) a medical/health certificate;
- (ii) a death certificate;
- (iii) a letter of support/explanation from a support service in the University, or other appropriate external support organisation. For full details of the types of letter that may be provided by the University, please visit: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/letters/>;
- (iv) An unavoidable absence from an in-class assessment due to representing Aberystwyth University at an official University sporting fixture may occasionally be accepted, however official confirmation from the Student Union that a student is representing the University **must** be submitted as supporting evidence;
- (v) where the circumstances involve a third party, students should seek to submit independent documentary evidence that explains the impact that this has had on them. If this is not possible, students may submit evidence relating to a third party provided that they receive written consent from them e.g. parent, sibling.

What type of evidence is not acceptable to support my special circumstances?

Photographic evidence will not normally be accepted as evidence. The exception to this is a photograph of an official letter or document.

What if I cannot obtain independent evidence in support of special circumstances?

The University recognises that it may not be possible for students to obtain independent documentary evidence in all circumstances during the 2021-22 academic session. In such cases, you should provide a detailed account of your special circumstances and the impact on your assessment(s). You should explain in full why it has not been possible to obtain documentary evidence.

Where it has not been possible to provide independent evidence during the 2021-22 session, students may be allowed to resit a module for an uncapped mark where a strong case is made. However, independent evidence remains a requirement for consideration in the Window of Opportunity, Academic Appeals, Final Reviews, and decisions made under the Academic Regulation on Academic Progress.

Should I submit special circumstances if I have missed an assessment deadline?

If you have missed an assessment deadline due to medical/personal reasons, then you should submit special circumstances with supporting documentary evidence that is relevant to the deadline date(s) of the missed assessment(s). If you have missed a deadline due to reasons that are not considered to be special circumstances then you should not submit a form.

What should I do if I need to be away from the University for a short period of time due to medical or personal reasons?

If you need to be away from university for a short period of time due to medical/personal reasons, then you should submit special circumstances if this absence has affected your performance. Examples include but are not limited to:

- illness;
- undergoing medical treatment;

- bereavement;
- or other compassionate grounds.

If the absence is likely to extend over a longer period of time, then you should speak to your department as you may wish to consider temporary withdrawal.

What compensation can I expect if my special circumstances are accepted?

If the special circumstances prevented you from completing assessed work or taking an examination, or have resulted in failure, Senate Examination Board may approve uncapped resit(s). It is not normal practice to raise a module mark due to special circumstances. Further details of what you can expect can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/>

Have my special circumstances been accepted?

Special circumstances are not accepted/confirmed during the semester.

Special circumstances are only considered at the end of each semester by examination boards.

I submitted special circumstances but have not been granted an extension. What should I do?

You cannot request an extension by submitting special circumstances.

To request an extension you should submit an Extension Request Form, that can be found here: [https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-\(27.10.21\).docx](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-(27.10.21).docx) and forward the completed form with all supporting evidence to the relevant Department Extension Officer. A list of Department Extension Officers can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/officers/>

The request form and supporting evidence should be submitted to the academic department at least 3 working days before the deadline. Requests received less than 3 working days before the deadline will normally be considered by the Departmental/Faculty Special Circumstances Board, and students are advised to follow the Special Circumstances procedure (www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic/special-circumstances/). The only exception to this requirement will be where it is clear from the evidence provided that the medical/personal circumstances have arisen within this three day period.

What is the difference between special circumstances and extensions?

Extensions can allow you extra time, from one to fourteen calendar days, to complete an assessment if you have been affected by medical/personal circumstances. This route should be followed where the circumstances correspond to an assessment deadline and you only need a small amount of extra time to complete an assessment.

Special circumstances should be followed if your medical/personal circumstances have prevented you from completing assessed work or taking an examination, or you have been able to complete all assessments but you believe your medical/personal circumstances have affected your overall academic performance.

How can I request an extension for a coursework deadline?

To request an extension you should submit an Extension Request Form if there are **clear medical/personal circumstances** (supported by independent documentary evidence) that have affected your ability to submit coursework on time. The Extension Request Form can be found

here: [https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-\(27.10.21\).docx](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-(27.10.21).docx). Forward the completed form with all supporting evidence to the relevant Department Extension Officer. A list of Department Extension

Officers can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/officers/>

The request form and supporting evidence should be submitted to the academic department at least 3 working days before the deadline. Requests received less than 3 working days before the deadline will normally be considered by the Departmental/Faculty Special Circumstances Board, and students are advised to follow the Special Circumstances procedure (www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic/special-circumstances/). The only exception to this requirement will be where it is clear from the evidence provided that the medical/personal circumstances have arisen within this three day period.

What should I do if I am struggling to complete an assessment by the deadline?

If you are struggling to complete an assessment by the deadline you may be able to apply for an extension where there are **clear medical/personal circumstances** (supported by independent documentary evidence) that have affected your ability to submit coursework on time.

To request an extension you should submit an Extension Request Form, that can be found here: [https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-\(27.10.21\).docx](https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/media/departmental/academicregistry/admissions/academicqualityhandbook/section3-assessmentoftaughtschemes/extensionpolicy/Extension-Request-Form-2021-22-(27.10.21).docx) and forward the completed form with all supporting evidence to the relevant Department Extension Officer. A list of Department Extension Officers can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/officers/>

The request form and supporting evidence should be submitted to the academic department at least 3 working days before the deadline. Requests received less than 3 working days before the deadline will normally be considered by the Departmental/Faculty Special Circumstances Board, and students are advised to follow the Special Circumstances procedure (www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic/special-circumstances/). The only exception to

this requirement will be where it is clear from the evidence provided that the medical/personal circumstances have arisen within this three day period.

What type of evidence will I need to provide to support an extension request?

Acceptable documentary evidence to support an extension request includes, but is not limited to:

- (i) a medical/health certificate with relevant date to the assessment;
- (ii) a death certificate;
- (iii) a letter of support/explanation from a support service in the University, or other appropriate external support organisation. For full details of the types of letter that may be provided by the University, please visit: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/student-support/letters/>;
- (iv) where the circumstances involve a third party, students should seek to submit independent documentary evidence that explains the impact that this has had on them. If this is not possible, students may submit evidence relating to a third party provided that they receive written consent from them e.g. parent, sibling.
- (v) Common Ailments Consultation Letter / note from pharmacist.

What type of evidence is not acceptable to support an extension request?

Photographic evidence will not normally be accepted as evidence. The exception to this is a photograph of an official letter or document.

What should I do if I need to apply for an extension but I cannot provide evidence?

If you are unable to present supporting evidence with your form, you must give clear reasons for being unable to do so and also give an indication of when the evidence will be

provided. The Extension Officer may then grant an extension pending receipt of the evidence. Failing to present supporting evidence later may lead to the extension being rescinded and a mark of zero given for the assessment at the subsequent Examination Board.

For 2021-22 only, the Extension Officer may grant an extension in the absence of supporting evidence, provided that you have explained clearly why it is not possible for you to present evidence.

I have been granted an extension for 14 calendar days, but I need more time. What should I do?

The maximum extension period is fourteen calendar days, the University's responsibilities under equality legislation notwithstanding. If this will not be sufficient, you are advised to follow the Special Circumstances procedure which can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html#d.en.43491>.

I have missed an assessment deadline because of medical/personal circumstances. Can I still apply for an extension?

No, retrospective requests for extensions will not be considered. Where the deadline is missed, you are advised to follow the Special Circumstances procedure which can be found here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html#d.en.43491>.

Can I request an extension for any type of assessment?

No, there are elements of assessed work for which it may not be possible to grant an extension, for example, a group presentation or an assessed group performance. You should check with your Department before submitting an extension form if you are unsure as to whether an extension may be granted. If it is not possible to have an extension for an assessment and you are unable to complete the assessment, then you are advised to follow

the Special Circumstances procedure which can be found

here: <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/name-193260-en.html#d.en.43491>.