

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title	Special Circumstances Policy	Policy Number	502
Section	Student Affairs	Approval Date	4 June 2024
Subsection	General Student Policies	Authorizing Entity	BoT
Responsible Office	Student Affairs	Effective Date	1 August 2024
Distributed To	All AUBH Faculty and Staff	Next Review Date	4 June 2026

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Special Circumstances Policy is established to provide a framework for addressing exceptional situations that may warrant special consideration. This policy aims to ensure fairness, consistency, and efficiency in handling requests for exceptions to standard policies and procedures. The policy is evaluated and implemented by the Special Circumstances Committee (SCC).
- 1.2 The scope of the policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate students.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Special circumstances are circumstances that are exceptional for the individual student, are beyond that student's control, and for which there is sufficient evidence to show that they can have a significant adverse impact on the student's academic performance in assessment or ability to attend classes for multiple subjects/courses.

2.2 Examples of circumstances that the SCC is likely to accept include:

- Learning disabilities
- Significant short-term physical illness or injury (e.g., resulting from a car accident)
- Significant mental health issues (e.g. depression)
- A long-term or chronic physical health condition (e.g., cancer)
- Bereavement or serious illness of a person with whom the student has a close relationship
- Inability to attend classes due to hospitalization or imprisonment.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 It is the responsibility of students to submit their request for consideration of special circumstances to Student Affairs to be later submitted to the Special Circumstances Committee (SCC).

3.2 The SCC will review each case and consider the unique circumstances of each student. The committee may recommend a range of possible adjustments as needed. It is important to highlight that the purpose of

Policies and Procedures

the special arrangements is to attempt to remove barriers and provide students with equal opportunities to achieve academically rather than lowering academic standards.

3.3 The following list indicates some of the possible recommendations that the committee might make:

- Lowering the minimum attendance requirement
- Granting extensions for deadlines
- Allowing extra time during examinations/tests
- Allowing a different mode of assessment
- Compensation of grades for work that is worth 20% (or less) of the final grade
- Allowing students to repeat an assessment with/without a cap

3.4 The SCC will provide a written report of its decisions on these matters to the relevant parties (e.g. Registrar, Academic Advisor, Examination Office).

3.5 The decisions made by the committee are binding on other bodies (e.g. Colleges) that may have to decide on appropriate action in relation to the student's course outcome or progression.

3.6 Confidentiality :

The committee will treat the information provided by students as confidential. It will only be shared with staff who have a legitimate need to access the information in order to consider the student's case or to provide students with support. Copies of the supporting evidence submitted to the committee should be kept anonymous. It is the responsibility of the Counsellor (i.e., SCC Secretary) to preserve the confidentiality of students when sharing documents with other members and also when filing records. All soft and hard copies of the relevant documents should be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet or an online file with limited access. SCC members can have access to the meeting minutes, while request forms and supporting evidence can only be accessed by the Director of Student Affairs and the Counsellor.

4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 Students are required to submit valid documentation to support their request (SCC Request form). Students should describe the circumstances, state how the circumstances are affecting their academic achievement, and may request particular adjustments. When reporting special circumstances, students must provide a list of all the courses that they are registered in during the current term and the faculty members teaching them. The Counsellor may also refer cases to the committee for consideration.

4.2 Examples of acceptable supporting evidence:

- An independent assessment of the student's illness by a medical practitioner.
- Evidence from another professional service at AUBH, e.g. Student Counselling;
- Death certificate
- Written accounts from University staff who have directly witnessed the circumstances or their impact on the student's well-being or ability to perform in assessment
- Written account from an independent third party from outside the University, such as a therapist
- Documentary evidence from other sources, e.g., police reports and legal documents.

Policies and Procedures

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

5.1 - Special Circumstances Request Form

POLICY HISTORY			
Date of Last Action	Action Taken/Changes	Authorizing Entity	Effective Date