

Extenuating Circumstances Policy 2020-21

1. Scope of policy
 - 1.1. Valid extenuating circumstances can only be used to gain further time for assessments and, if appropriate, the removal of a capped mark. They cannot be used to gain additional marks.
 - 1.2. An assessment board may consider certain extenuating circumstances in mitigation of:
 - i. failure to submit work by the assessment submission deadline; and
 - ii. failure to attend for assessments or examinations.
 - 1.3. Extenuating circumstances are circumstances which:
 - i. are exceptional;
 - ii. are outside the student's control;
 - iii. should be corroborated by independent evidence;
 - iv. are likely to have a negative impact on the student's ability to undertake or complete assessments; and
 - v. are short term, lasting no more than four weeks.

Examples include:

- illness at the time of the date for the submission of work or the examination;
 - bereavement;
 - an acute episode of a chronic condition which has an impact on the student not mitigated by any reasonable adjustments (such as adjusted deadlines) already in place; and
 - unusually severe mental or emotional stress at or immediately before the date for submission of work or the time of the examination.
- 1.4. Examples of the kind of circumstances which will **not** be deemed valid are:
 - i. a short term problem such as a cold which has occurred during the course of a term, since students are expected to plan their work schedule sufficiently well so that minor illnesses or problems do not affect their ability to meet submission deadlines;
 - ii. mild unspecified depression or a level of anxiety and stress which normally occurs at assessment time;
 - iii. technical problems, such as a corrupted disk, lack of a printer, loss of work on a computer with no back up. Students are advised to keep copies, prototypes, photographs and a record of work submitted for assessment;

- iv. part-time students may not make a claim of extenuating circumstances relating to pressure of work, since they have, by implication, made a commitment to make available the time necessary for study;
- v. a long term health condition or disability for which reasonable adjustments have already been made;
- vi. complaints against staff or in relation to course delivery, which are managed through the School's complaints procedure; and
- vii. personal disruptions or events which could have been anticipated; such as holidays, weddings, changing address or employment, religious holidays or festivals which are usually known in advance.

These examples are not definitive and are intended only as a guide. In all cases Student Services has authority to use discretion, taking into account the full circumstances of a particular case.

- 1.5. It is the responsibility of the student to invoke this process where they believe they may have extenuating circumstances which have affected their ability to meet an assessment deadline. Applications for consideration of extenuating circumstances should normally be accompanied by independent corroborating evidence, for example, a doctor's certificate. Students who choose not to reveal any medical or other problem will not normally be able to use this information as the grounds for any subsequent appeal; where this information has not been made available, the review of an assessment board decision will only be undertaken under the most exceptional circumstances as a result of a successful appeal.
- 1.6. Students who wish extenuating circumstances to be considered should complete an online Extenuating Circumstances application via their student portal. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all information is complete and accurate.
- 1.7. Extenuating circumstances claims should be submitted as soon as possible to the event(s) noted within the claim. All claims, including supporting evidence, must be submitted within two weeks of the assessment deadline. Claims submitted after this timeframe will not normally be considered. Claims made more than four weeks in advance of a submission deadline will not normally be considered unless they relate to in-patient hospital treatment.
- 1.8. Claims are initially considered by a Student Administration Officer; where an application is clearly supported with appropriate evidence a provisional decision will then be made to uphold the application. Students will normally be informed of the outcome of this initial consideration of their claim via email to their School email address. Where a Student Services Officer is unable to decide whether a claim should be approved, it will be referred for consideration to the Director of Student Services for a provisional decision. The Director may defer a decision pending further investigation or the need for further supporting evidence.
- 1.9. Where a student has valid extenuating circumstances, a new assessment submission deadline will be set. This will be the standard institutional deferral deadline.

- 1.10. Students can be assured that all claims of extenuating circumstances are treated as confidential and any information submitted will be used only to determine the validity of the claim. The assessment board and/or course tutors considering the student in question will be notified only that a named student has valid extenuating circumstances.
 - 1.11. All approvals of applications for consideration of extenuating circumstances remain provisional until ratified at an Assessment Board.
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2. Appeals
 - 2.1. Any student wishing to appeal a decision made on the basis of this policy should follow the School's appeals procedure.
 - 2.2. Students who have not submitted a claim of extenuating circumstances under these regulations will not normally be able to use extenuating circumstances as the basis for a later appeal against the decision of an assessment board.

Document version control

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