

Extenuating circumstances policy and procedure (student version)

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1. Context

An Extenuating Circumstance is defined as a problem that a student has encountered which goes beyond the normal difficulties experienced in life and that has affected their academic performance adversely during the assessment period for which they are claiming. The Academy endeavours to ensure a fair and robust assessment procedure. To facilitate this we need to ensure that all our students receive equal opportunities to complete work to the best of their ability. This means we cannot allow one student longer to complete an assignment than another without good reason or penalty; it is not the intention of the extenuating circumstances procedure to mitigate failure or give students an unfair advantage over their peers. Illness or some other good reason may leave students unable to submit an assignment, but late submission is not a right (see **Appendix A** for table of reasons). Applications for consideration will normally be accompanied by a medical certificate or other written evidence.

Students should be advised to first discuss their circumstances with the relevant tutor or Programme/ Pathway Leader or member of the Academic Team and should give due consideration to whether the circumstances are significant before submitting a form. The table at the end of this policy gives examples of reasons that are acceptable, reasons that may be considered and more importantly reasons that are likely to be unacceptable. It also provides examples of typical evidence that would need to be submitted to substantiate a claim. This table is for guidance only and will be referred to by staff when arriving at decisions.

Note: Where a student is aware that particular circumstances, be they work-related, family or financial problems, or any other issues, are likely to interfere with their ability to successfully complete their academic work at any time, it is open to the student to suspend/interrupt studies for a period (up to twelve consecutive months, which may be extended in exceptional circumstances) and to return to complete the programme of study when the problems are not so great.

Please see the [Withdrawal and Interruption of Studies Policy for further details](#) (available on [Moodle](#)).

It may also be possible for a student undertaking a full time programme to transfer to part time study so as better to balance academic and other commitments.

Students with Specific Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities and other (Short Term) Needs

The Academy's aim is to ensure, as far as possible, a 'level playing field' by providing appropriate forms of support to enable students to undertake assessments and achieve the learning outcomes of modules. The Academy is committed to eliminating discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for students. The Alternative Assessment Policy has been developed to assist students who are disabled, have specific learning difficulties or have experienced exceptional medical or personal circumstances, by attempting to minimise any adverse impact on their study and performance in assessments.

Please see the [Alternative Assessment Policy](#) for further details and the [Alternative Assessment Arrangement Form](#).

Students and staff must consult with the Academic team for advice which may lead to the submission of a claim for a Disabled Student Allowance and thereby the provision of appropriate specified support.

1.1 Submission of information on extenuating circumstances

The Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form is in **Appendix B** of this policy. It is also available from the Academic Programme Manager or downloadable from Moodle Applications are considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel during the academic year. For their circumstances to be considered the student must complete an extenuating circumstances claim form and submit this, together with all required evidence, to the Academic Programme Manager.

Submission of extenuating circumstances for an extension must be submitted before the stated deadline for assessment or within seven calendar days of the circumstances, whichever is the sooner.

1.2 Confidentiality

The Academy understands that students may be reluctant to disclose confidential personal information. However, students can be assured that all claims of extenuating circumstances are deemed to be confidential to the Academic team, Extenuating Circumstances Panel and to the Examination and Progression Board and will not be disclosed outside those meetings (other than if they need to be considered as part of a student appeal).

If a student is reluctant to disclose information of a particularly personal nature, he or she may enter the word 'Confidential' on the form in the relevant boxes and attach written evidence in a sealed envelope. The information will then be made available only to the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

1.3 Consideration of extenuating circumstances: Extenuating Circumstances Panel

Claims will be considered within seven working days of submission by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, which works under the authority of the Examination and Progression Board. **Students will be advised of the decision regarding their claim within ten working days of submission.** Students are therefore advised to continue working on their submissions so that they do not waste the time if their application is deemed valid, particularly if their application is close to the original deadline date.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel meeting is to determine whether the extenuating circumstances submitted are valid (that is, that they are exceptional, outside the student's control, and corroborated by appropriate independent documentary evidence). An Extenuating Circumstances Panel must accept the professional recommendation of a medical practitioner or qualified counsellor regarding the effect on a student of a particular condition or problem. But in the absence of an opinion as to the impact of the illness or condition the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may use its own judgement to determine whether the circumstances are likely to have had an impact on performance.

If a student fails, without good cause, to provide sufficient evidence to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel within the published timescales, the request will be rejected. Following each Extenuating Circumstances Panel, students will be sent a letter/email confirming the decision made regarding their Extenuating Circumstances application.

If a panel deems an application to be valid they will **normally grant an extension of ten working days**, but will decide timescales on an individual basis; all new deadlines will depend on how much work is required, availability of resources or other contributory factors.

Once the decision to accept the extenuating circumstances has occurred, the circumstances are considered to be 'spent'. In other words the acceptance and decision of the panel is judged to be the resolution of the matter. If the same circumstances continue, re-occur, or other circumstances arise which impact significantly on the ability of the student to complete subsequent assessments on time, a new extenuating circumstances application must be submitted.

Where students have an ongoing verifiable cause that will affect their ability to meet further assessment deadlines, an application for alternative assessment arrangements can be made. Students should seek advice from their Programme/ Pathway Leader or the Academic Team.

The Alternative Assessment Policy and accompanying Alternative Assessment Arrangement Form can be found on [Moodle](#)

1.3.1 Extenuating Circumstances Panel Membership:

- Director of Programmes (Chair)
- A Programme/ Pathway Leader (of a different programme to which the student is enrolled)
- Academic Programme Manager
- Academic Administrator (acting as Secretary)

Terms of Reference

a) The Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) reports to the Examination and Progression Board, to which it makes recommendations. The Board of Examiners will consider no other extenuating circumstances and no member of the Board of Examiners is permitted to make additional representations on behalf of students.

b) The panel will consider cases of extenuating circumstances submitted by students who feel that their performance in assessments may have been adversely affected. These circumstances will normally involve cases of illness, serious accident or bereavement – only exceptionally other factors as listed in column A of the table of reasons/ categories (**Appendix A**). Applications for consideration will normally be accompanied by a medical certificate or other written evidence which it is the role of the panel to scrutinise.

c) The panel can make the following recommendations to the Examination and Progression Board;

- Provide a student with the opportunity to take the affected assessment(s) as if for the first time i.e. a 'sit' or 'submit', allowing them to be given the full marks achieved for the examination or assessment, rather than imposing a cap;
- waive late submission penalties;
- determine that there is sufficient evidence of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes from other pieces of assessment in the module(s) for an overall mark to be derived;
- note the accepted extenuation for the module(s) and recommend that it is taken into account at the point of award and classification.

e) Extenuating circumstances applications considered by the panel will be monitored and a summary reported to the QAC and the Examination and Progression Board.

1.4 Consideration of extenuating circumstances: Examination and Progression Board

If the circumstances are deemed valid, this decision will be forwarded to the Examination and Progression Board who will take it into account. Extenuating circumstances may be taken into account not only where a student has failed an assessment or part of an assessment but also to take into account where student performance may have been impeded.

If extenuating circumstances are deemed valid, the Examination and Progression Board will normally offer a student another attempt at the assessment without penalty, thus if the assessment affected by the circumstances was a first/second attempt, the student will be offered a sit/submit as if for the first/second time.

Under certain circumstances, the Examination and Progression Board may exercise discretion in deciding on the particular form any reassessment should take. Options include viva voce examination, additional assessment tasks designed to show whether the student has satisfied the programme learning outcomes, review of previous work, or normal assessment at the next available opportunity. The student should not be put in a position of unfair advantage or disadvantage over other candidates; the aim should be to enable the student to be assessed on equal terms.

Where the Examination and Progression Board has not been recommended by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel that the student has presented a valid case, the student does not have a right to re-sit as if for the first time.

2. Appeals

A student has the right to appeal against the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, as to whether or not to accept an Extenuating Circumstances claim. Such **appeals must be submitted within ten working days of the outcome of the extenuating circumstances claim** being communicated to the student and may be made on the following grounds:

- A material and demonstrable procedural irregularity in the Extenuating Circumstances process.
- Evidence that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel did not consider all the information available to it at the time of its consideration of the claim.

Appeals will not be considered on the following grounds:

- Dissatisfaction with the reasonable judgment of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in its consideration of the Extenuating Circumstances claim,
- Late submission of an application for Extenuating Circumstances or late submission of evidence to support an application where there are no compelling grounds for why the application was made late.

Appeals should be made in writing in line with the Academic Appeals Procedure.

A student who has not submitted a claim of extenuating circumstances in line with this guidance will not normally be able to use extenuating circumstances as the basis for a subsequent appeal.

Policies and documents that supplement and reference this document:

Quality Handbook
Student Handbook
Tutor Handbook
Student Disciplinary policy and procedure
Alternative Assessment Policy
Academic Appeals Policy
Withdrawal and Interruption of Studies Policy

Version 3 September 2018 Approved by the Academic Board.

Appendix A - Table of reasons/ categories

Reason for EC Claim:	Category A: <i>Acceptable reason</i>	Category A: <i>Evidence required</i>	Category B: <i>Reasons that may be considered</i>	Category B: <i>Evidence required</i>	Category C: <i>Unacceptable reason</i>
Serious Medical Condition	Serious personal injury, medical condition, or mental health condition preventing attendance or completion of assessment or submission of work	Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	Serious injury or illness to child, partner or close relative (parent) Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing medical condition, mental health condition or disability	Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Ongoing medical conditions (including disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions which are ongoing) Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hayfever)
Bereavement	Death of parent, (including step-parents and legal guardian) child, siblings, spouses or common law partners.	Written evidence from a professional such as Undertaker, Coroner or Registrar OR Death Certificate	Death of close relative (not identified in Category A) or friend	Evidence identified in Category A AND Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Death of Pet
Trauma	Victim of serious crime (e.g. rape, assault, mugging) Theft of work required for assessment Direct experience of terrorist incident or natural disaster Major fire in residence	Written corroboration of reported crime from Police or other investigating authority Written evidence from registered medical practitioner, Police, Fire service or Academy Facilities Manager	Family breakdown (such as divorce)	Evidence from Solicitor AND/OR Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Minor crime Financial problems or employment difficulties Accommodation problems or house moves General domestic / family problems Assessment Exam stress
Caring Responsibilities			Unexpected caring responsibilities	Written evidence from	Ongoing caring responsibilities

			caused by sudden serious illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition to child, partner or close relative	patient's registered medical practitioner AND Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Caring responsibilities for minor illnesses, accidents or injuries
Court Attendance	Jury Service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff	Official correspondence from Court or Tribunal Authority			Supporting friend or relative at Court or Tribunal
Miscellaneous			Serious disruption caused by terrorist incident or natural disaster	Evidence of serious disruption to travel or other plans preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work AND/OR Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Any circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance or do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment Visa problems Failing of IT or technical equipment Minor private or public transport failure, holidays or booked travel arrangements

Appendix B - Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form.
Extenuating Circumstances Claim Form.

This form should be completed in conjunction with the tutor of the module that you are requesting a deadline extension/ extenuating circumstances for. You should read the Extenuating circumstances policy before applying and discuss it with your tutor or Programme/ Pathway Leader.

Procedures for consideration:

For their circumstances to be considered you must complete an extenuating circumstances claim form and submit this, together with all required evidence, to the Academic Programme Manager. Submission of extenuating circumstances for an extension must be submitted **before the stated deadline for assessment or within 7 calendar days of the circumstances**, whichever is the sooner.

Applications are considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel during the academic year. Students should be advised to first discuss their circumstances with the relevant tutor/programme/ department leader or member of the Academic team.

If the extenuating circumstances claim is considered to be justified the student may be required to submit work to a new deadline as a first attempt or allow resubmission of work as a first attempt. Depending on how much work is required, availability of resources or other contributory factors, the panel will set a new deadline. The student will be advised whether the claim has been accepted as soon as possible after the Extenuating Circumstances Panel has met. Once the decision to accept the extenuating circumstances has occurred, the circumstances are considered to be 'spent'. In other words the acceptance and decision of the panel is judged to be the resolution of the matter. If the same circumstances continue, re-occur, or other circumstances arise which impact significantly on the ability of the student to complete subsequent assessments on time, a new extenuating circumstances application must be submitted.

This form **MUST** be submitted to the Academic Programme Manager and signed off by the Director of Programmes.

Student Details

Student name:	Programme:
Academic year:	Year/ level:
Mobile number:	Email Address:
Mode of attendance:	Personal Tutor:

Assignment details

Module title:

Module code:

Deadline date:

Tutor:

Programme Leader/ Head of department:

Table of reasons/ categories

Reason for EC Claim:	Category A: <i>Acceptable reason</i>	Category A: <i>Evidence required</i>	Category B: <i>Reasons that may be considered</i>	Category B: <i>Evidence required</i>	Category C: <i>Unacceptable reason</i>
Serious Medical Condition	Serious personal injury, medical condition, or mental health condition preventing attendance or completion of assessment or submission of work	Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	Serious injury or illness to child, partner or close relative (parent) Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing medical condition, mental health condition or disability	Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Ongoing medical conditions (including disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions which are ongoing) Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hayfever)
Bereavement	Death of parent, (including step-parents and legal guardian) child, siblings, spouses or common law partners.	Written evidence from a professional such as Undertaker, Coroner or Registrar OR Death Certificate	Death of close relative (not identified in Category A) or friend	Evidence identified in Category A AND Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Death of Pet
Trauma	Victim of serious crime (e.g. rape, assault, mugging) Theft of work	Written corroboration of reported crime from Police or other investigating	Family breakdown (such as divorce)	Evidence from Solicitor AND/OR Written evidence of impact to claimant from	Minor crime Financial problems or employment difficulties

	<p>required for assessment</p> <p>Direct experience of terrorist incident or natural disaster</p> <p>Major fire in residence</p>	<p>authority</p> <p>Written evidence from registered medical practitioner, Police, Fire service or Academy Facilities Manager</p>		<p>registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Accommodation problems or house moves</p> <p>General domestic / family problems</p> <p>Assessment Exam stress</p>
Caring Responsibilities			<p>Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by sudden serious illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition to child, partner or close relative</p>	<p>Written evidence from patient's registered medical practitioner AND</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing caring responsibilities</p> <p>Caring responsibilities for minor illnesses, accidents or injuries</p>
Court Attendance	<p>Jury Service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff</p>	<p>Official correspondence from Court or Tribunal Authority</p>			<p>Supporting friend or relative at Court or Tribunal</p>
Miscellaneous			<p>Serious disruption caused by terrorist incident or natural disaster</p>	<p>Evidence of serious disruption to travel or other plans preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work AND/OR</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Any circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance or do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment</p> <p>Visa problems</p> <p>Failing of IT or technical equipment</p> <p>Minor private or public transport failure, holidays or booked travel arrangements</p>

Further details

Please complete the following information. In all cases, claims must be substantiated by original independent documentary evidence. This must be an official document e.g. a letter signed on official headed paper, and must include the dates during which the circumstances applied (see table above for examples)

Important Information

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR 2018, we are required to gain your consent to the following:-

- To hold some elements of the information you have provided on an electronic database;
- To disclose the information that you have provided to authorised members of Academy staff as required for the reasonable purposes connected with the investigation in the case of an appeal or complaint.

By signing here, you confirm that you agree with the above statements and indicate your consent for the information provided to be used as detailed above.

(b) False Claims

You should note that the submission of a false claim or fraudulent documentation is a serious matter and is an academic offence, which will be dealt with under the Academy's Student Disciplinary Procedures. The Academy reserves the right to check on the validity of the document(s) submitted by contacting the third party directly.

I agree with the statements contained above and confirm that the information which I have given is true and that I have read and understood the Procedures for the Submission of Extenuating Circumstances.

Signed.....Date.....

BEFORE YOU SUBMIT THIS FORM, PLEASE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE FORM CORRECTLY.

Office use only

Approval for extension	
Tutor:	
New Deadline:	
Director of Programmes signature:	
Comments:	