

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students)

1. Policy

- 1.1 You are expected to submit all assessments by the published deadlines and attend assessment activities as scheduled. If assessments are not completed on time, the penalty for late submission/non-attendance/non-submission will be applied.
- 1.2 You are expected to be able to cope with many life events alongside your studies, to manage your workload properly, and to expect a level of pressure around the time of assessments which may lead to feelings of stress and anxiety. If you are well enough i.e. feeling well and functioning effectively, you should undertake all assessments and will not need to submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances.
- 1.3 You are responsible for managing your own personal circumstances and informing the University of any issues which you believe are having an impact on your studies within a reasonable timescale. There are many resources and support services offered by the University to help you plan and deal with the pressure of assessment.
- 1.4 If you experience a severe and exceptional circumstance in the period immediately prior to, or at the time of, an assessment, you should submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances to your school to be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Group. The Extenuating Circumstances Group will decide whether the circumstances declared satisfy the criteria for extenuating circumstances (see paragraph 1.5 below) and, where appropriate, determine any remedy that will be applied.
- 1.5 An extenuating circumstance is:
 - Severe and exceptional; and
 - Unforeseen or unavoidable; and
 - Close in time to an assessment; or where you can demonstrate the circumstances continued to have an impact on you at the time of the assessment.
- 1.6 Typically, when you experience extenuating circumstances you will be unable to complete the assessment as scheduled. There are limited situations when you can submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances if you have started or completed an assessment (see paragraph 2.5).
- 1.7 Examples of extenuating circumstances are:
 - Serious short-term illness or an accident
 - Bereavement, i.e. the death of a close relative or friend, partner, or significant other person
 - Significant adverse personal or family circumstances

- Being a victim of a serious crime such as sexual assault, discrimination, assault, burglary etc.
- Severe financial issues
- Exceptional technical issues experienced at the time of an assessment and consequently you are unable to complete the assessment, or the completion of your assessment has been impacted
- Evidence of a long-term health condition or disability which has worsened or changed, and which is not mitigated by an approved reasonable adjustment
- Disability which has recently been identified and where it has not been possible to agree a reasonable adjustment time for the assessment
- You are a carer for a person who experiences a change in their condition and subsequently their requirements and your responsibilities as a carer change
- You are a part-time student and exceptional, unforeseen or unavoidable professional commitments arise

1.8 Examples of circumstances which are **not** extenuating are:

- Minor illnesses that typically would not cause you to take time away from study
- Poor time management e.g. where you have not given yourself sufficient time to complete the assessment by the deadline. You should allow sufficient time to upload assessments to University systems
- Assessment-related stress which is not diagnosed as an illness or documented in your Individual Support Adjustment Notification (ISAN)
- Where the event/circumstances reported were foreseeable or able to be anticipated, for example, planned events, such as Jury Service, armed service deployment, competing/attendance at sporting, arts, or other extra-curricular events, holidays, weddings, planned religious festivals/events; or other family-related events
- Where the event/circumstance is not close in time to the assessment
- Where reasonable adjustments have already been agreed and put in place for you
- Paid employment or other financial issues.

1.9 Generally, you should be able to complete assessments without the need to submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances. If you frequently submit declarations of extenuating circumstances your school will be in contact with you to better understand your circumstances as it suggests that mitigating actions may be required to support your studies, for example, you may need to take some time away from your studies (under the interruption of study procedure), or a needs assessment by the Student Disability Service in accordance with the reasonable adjustments policy.

1.10 If you do not complete an assessment i.e. submit coursework or sit a timed-assessment, because you have extenuating circumstances, you may be required to complete the assessment at a later time to attain credit, or equivalent for non-modular programmes. Your progress to the next academic year or the award of a degree may be delayed if you do not have sufficient credits, or equivalent for non-modular programmes.

2. Procedure

- 2.1 If you experience an exceptional circumstance in the period immediately prior to or at the time of an assessment, you should submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances – access to the form is available via the Student Intranet. If you are not sure whether your circumstances are exceptional and satisfy the criteria for extenuating circumstances, independent advice and support in completing the declaration can be obtained from the Students' Union Student Advice team.
- 2.2 A separate declaration of extenuating circumstances is required for each assessment. Further information on the deadline for the submission of your declaration of extenuating circumstances, whether you are required to submit evidence, and the possible remedies, is provided in paragraph 2.5 below. As your circumstances should be close in time to the assessment, you should not submit a declaration of extenuating circumstances more than two weeks before the scheduled date for the completion of the assessment.
- 2.3 Declarations of extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Group or a nominated alternate. You should expect to receive the outcome for the declaration you have submitted within 7 days if you have declared extenuating circumstances for one of the following:
- Student unable to submit coursework by the submission deadline
 - Student unable to submit postgraduate taught Master's dissertation by the deadline
 - Student unable to attend an examination/time-limited assessment

If you have declared extenuating circumstances for any other reason, you should expect to receive the decision within 28 days as it will be considered by the Group.

- 2.4 The Extenuating Circumstances Group, or nominated alternate, will decide whether the circumstances you describe in your declaration satisfy the criteria for extenuating circumstances, as specified in paragraph 1.5. If it is decided that your circumstances are not extenuating, your declaration will be rejected and no remedy will be provided.
- 2.5 If the Extenuating Circumstances Group, or nominated alternate, decides that your circumstances are extenuating it will inform you of the agreed remedy, based on the information you have provided in the declaration. The permitted remedies are detailed in the below table:

| Reason for declaration | Deadline for submission of declaration | Evidence required with declaration | Possible remedies |
|---|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Unable to submit coursework by the submission deadline (original or extended) | Before the deadline for the submission of coursework | No | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1-week extension (2-week for part-time) |

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| deadline) due to exceptional circumstances | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defer the coursework to the next assessment period |
| Unable to submit postgraduate taught Master's dissertation by the deadline due to exceptional circumstances | Before the deadline for the submission of dissertation | No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4-week extension Defer the dissertation to the next assessment period |
| Unable to attend an examination/time-limited assessment due to exceptional circumstances | Within 24 hours of the start time of the examination | No | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defer the assessment to the next assessment period |
| Taken ill or technical issues during an examination or time-limited assessment | Contact your school immediately and submit declaration before the school deadline | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defer the assessment to the next assessment period |
| Completed an assessment and have circumstances related to a protected characteristic (under the Equality Act (2010), long term health condition or caring responsibilities | Before the school deadline | Yes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remedy to be decided by the Examining Board |

- 2.5.1 The extension periods stated above are set and are not flexible; no further extension will be permitted. If an extension is not a sufficient remedy you will need to submit a further declaration of extenuating circumstances, demonstrating why you were unable to submit by the extended deadline i.e. the circumstances are new or existing circumstances which have changed or worsened. In such circumstances the only remedy would be to permit deferral to the next assessment period.
- 2.5.2 Usually, for those assessments scheduled during the academic year the next assessment period will be the resit assessment period. For assessments scheduled for the resit period, the next assessment period will be when the assessments are scheduled during the following academic year.
- 2.5.3 The School deadline only applies to declarations where evidence is required and will be published by the School in advance of the assessment.

2.6 Evidence submitted with the declaration of extenuating circumstances usually should be on headed paper, signed and dated, from a recognised authority. If the evidence submitted is not on headed paper or from a recognised authority, you should submit the documents which are available to you and provide an explanation why this is the evidence submitted. Evidence must be submitted in English or Welsh and translated evidence should be authenticated by an official translator. Types of evidence include:

- A GP/medical letter;
- A statement from a support service if you are known to them and have engaged with support services before the event. Support services staff will not be able to provide evidence for you if they do not have any prior knowledge of your general situation;
- A letter from a relevant third party, e.g. social worker.

If you are not sure what evidence should be submitted, independent advice and support can be obtained from the Students' Union Student Advice team.

3. Extenuating Circumstances Group

3.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Group is a School-based group of staff who will meet in person or virtually to consider requests. The members of the Group will be appointed by the Head of School and are:

- A member (not the Chair) of the Examining Board (Chair of the Group);
- Up to 5 members of academic staff;
- A Disability/Wellbeing representative;
- A member of the School's professional services staff, to advise the Group and liaise with Registry Operations;
- A representative from another School (for joint honours students).

3.2 The quorum for a meeting is the Chair plus 3 members. The Group will meet regularly throughout the academic year to ensure that all requests received are considered in a timely manner. A nominated alternate is permitted to take decisions on behalf of the Group relating to the following:

- Student unable to submit coursework by the submission deadline
- Student unable to submit postgraduate taught Master's dissertation by the deadline
- Student unable to attend an examination/time-limited assessment

to ensure that students receive timely decisions. The decisions taken by the nominated alternate must be reported to the Group.

3.3 The Disability/Wellbeing representative should liaise with the Chair to ensure that all students who disclose ongoing conditions are referred to the Student Disability Service as appropriate.

4. Reporting to the Examining Board

- 4.1 The Extenuating Circumstances Group will confirm to the Examining Board that actions have been taken in accordance with this procedure for students who have submitted a declaration of extenuating circumstances.
- 4.2 The Extenuating Circumstances Group will report to the Examining Board:
 - 4.2.1 students who have been permitted to defer assessments;
 - 4.2.2 students who have submitted extenuating circumstances which have been accepted as being related to protected characteristics (under the Equality Act (2010)), a long-term health condition, or caring responsibilities, and who have completed the assessment. The Examining Board will consider, and as appropriate, confirm one of the following remedies:
 - .1 Where the pass mark was not achieved for the assessment or the module, allow a retake of the assessment element as a 1st attempt (or 2nd/3rd if the student has failed previously) at the next available opportunity.
 - .2 Where the pass mark for the module has been achieved but the pass mark for the assessment element has not, offer the student the opportunity to retake the assessment element as a 1st attempt (or 2nd/3rd if the student has failed previously) **or** award the student credit for the module without further assessment.
 - .3 Where the module and assessment elements have been passed offer the student the chance to retake the assessment element if at 1st attempt **or** award the student credit for the module without further assessment.
- 4.3 If the student has been awarded credit for a module without further assessment, the Examining Board may discount module marks that have been affected by extenuating circumstances when calculating the final mark as specified in the Assessment Regulations.