

Extenuating Circumstances Policy for taught degree courses



1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1. All students are expected to manage their time appropriately and submit their assessments by the deadlines they have been given. However, during the course of their studies, students may be faced with significant personal circumstances e.g. health difficulties that impact their ability to study, complete an assessment or affect their performance in an assessment. This Policy sets out the University's arrangements for considering requests for extenuation in such circumstances.
- 1.2. This Policy applies to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students. It will only apply to Postgraduate Research students when they are studying the taught elements of a doctoral degree course otherwise, Postgraduate Research Students should contact the Doctoral School for further advice if they are experiencing extenuating circumstances
- 1.3. The policy applies only to summative assessments as these contribute to the final marks for modules and awards. The University operates an approach to ensure that all claims are dealt with fairly, equally and transparently so that no student is advantaged or disadvantaged by the policy.
- 1.4. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Assessment Guidance for Students and the Extenuating Circumstances Guidance for Students, which details the process for applying for Extenuating Circumstances.
- 1.5. The Extenuating Circumstances process is intended to mitigate the effects of unforeseen or unpreventable situations which impact on a student's ability to complete or submit a specific assessment(s). Where the circumstances are likely to affect performance for a longer period of time, students are advised to discuss their situation with a Personal Tutor, members of the administrative staff in the School and the University [Student Wellbeing & Advisory Services](#) who will be able to provide more specific advice and support.

2. What are Extenuating Circumstances?

- 2.1. **The University defines** Extenuating circumstances as circumstances which are **outside a student's control** and which may **temporarily** prevent a student from undertaking an assessment or have a **marked/ significant detrimental/adverse impact** on their ability to undertake assessment by coursework or examination to the standard normally expected.
- 2.2. This means that extenuating circumstances rarely occur and are deemed to be out of your control if they are: -
 - Unforeseeable - you would not have prior knowledge of the event (e.g. you cannot foresee that you will be involved in a car accident or have a medical emergency);
 - Unpreventable – you could not reasonably do anything in your power to prevent such an event (e.g. you cannot reasonably prevent a burst appendix.)

3. Extenuating Circumstances Applications

- 3.1. Extenuating circumstances are expected to have had a **serious** impact on your performance in

assessed work, e.g., may cause you to fail an exam which, based on other marks already obtained for the module or on marks obtained for coursework and examinations in other modules, you would otherwise have been able to pass, or may prevent you from actually taking an examination or completing other assessment (e.g. group or oral presentation).

- 3.2. Extenuating Circumstances are expected to impact only where they occur at the time of the assessment or in the period immediately leading up to the assessment. If a student was unwell for two weeks at the beginning of term, it would not normally be expected to impact on assessment later in the year unless the student can demonstrate valid reasons to support this.
- 3.3. Students are responsible for submitting their own applications for extenuating circumstances by the deadline applicable to the assessment as outlined on the [Extenuating Circumstances Webpages](#). Students are required to self-certify their circumstances. The University may request evidence from students following an Extenuating Circumstances application to enable further support to be provided.
- 3.4. Extenuating Circumstances applications received after the deadline will not usually be accepted or considered retrospectively..
- 3.5. Examples of acceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances are listed below. This does not represent an exhaustive list as individual circumstances vary and therefore, all extenuating circumstances applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis:
 - Serious or incapacitating illness, injury or medical condition,
 - Sudden and significant deterioration of on-going/ longer-term medical or mental health condition
 - Emergency operation on or shortly before the day of an examination or assessment deadline, or during the revision period
 - Recent diagnosis of a chronic medical condition, physical or psychological impairment or Specific learning difficulty (SpLD)
 - Unexpected significant personal or emotional circumstances for example parental divorce or bankruptcy in the immediate family
 - Sudden serious illness of dependent or close family member
 - Bereavement
 - Involvement in accident/ victim of crime or any other incident involving the police, ambulance or fire services
 - Representing the University at a national event or your country at an international event or being selected to take part in some other prestigious or significant event representing University or country
 - Jury Service (UK citizens only)
 - Court attendance (e.g. being charged with criminal offence, divorce proceedings, etc.)
 - Paid employment (**only for Part-time students**)
 - Major IT issues e.g. network outage at the time of a submission deadline/ School or University IT issues
 - Major transport disruption for example widespread industrial action on train services in the local area that prevent attendance at an in-person assessment
 - Other serious circumstances deemed acceptable by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee
- 3.6. Unacceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to:
 - Minor illnesses, e.g. coughs, colds, stomach ache that are not severe enough to prevent attendance at/completion of the assessment.
 - Self-diagnosed examination nerves, stress, insomnia either from student or a letter

from counselling indicating that the student reported feeling such stress, insomnia etc.

- Refusal to take up support offered by the Disability and Dyslexia Services or other sections of the University
- Personal/ domestic events that could have been anticipated and/or arrangements made, e.g. moving house, marrying, routine childcare
- Oversleeping
- Misreading the timetable
- Assessments/Examinations which are scheduled close together or on the same day
- Academic workload
- Paid employment (unless you are a part-time student in full- or part-time employment), voluntary work and job interviews (unless this relates to part of your degree course or is for a post-graduation job)
- Minor transport issues e.g. rush hour traffic
- Visa problems which prevent you from returning to the UK for examinations during published term dates and assessment periods. Prolonged visa issues should be managed through an interruption of studies.
- Minor IT issues e.g. short term network outage or slow internet speeds
- Choices in your personal life, e.g. family holidays; family celebrations; attending a sporting event
- Extra-curricular sports activities, e.g. taking part in a match for a local sports team
- Driving test
- Fasting
- Withdrawal or suspension of access to University facilities or studies
- Any other foreseeable/ preventable circumstance

4. Long-term Conditions/Pregnancy/Disabilities

4.1. Long-term health conditions (including pregnancy) and/or disabilities are not in themselves considered a basis for extenuating circumstances. However, students with long term conditions and/or disabilities are eligible to submit extenuating circumstances applications if they experience a serious unforeseen effect of their condition or if they experience extenuating circumstances based on factors not connected with their condition.

4.2. Students with on-going conditions are encouraged to access Disability and Dyslexia Services at the earliest opportunity to discuss support and reasonable adjustments, for specific learning requirements and assessments.

5. Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)

Under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), the University is required to take positive steps (make reasonable adjustments) to take account of students' disabilities so that they can fully participate in their studies and other benefits, facilities and services provided by the University. These arrangements are intended to make full adjustments for the condition therefore, the Extenuating Circumstances Committee will not consider Extenuating Circumstances applications based upon a SpLD alone. However, students who have a SpLD are eligible to submit extenuating circumstances which meet the criteria set out in section 3 of this policy.

6. Extenuating Circumstances Decisions

6.1. Extenuating Circumstances applications are considered by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee, supported by Student Administration.

- 6.2. The membership of the committee is outlined in section 4 of the [Regulations for the Conduct of Assessment](#). The Committee is a closed meeting to protect privacy and to ensure that extenuating circumstances are only known to a small group.
- 6.3. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee meets on a regular basis to consider applications. Each application on a case-by-case basis and either accept or reject the application.
- 6.4. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will inform the School Progression and Awards Board whether a student's extenuating circumstances application has been accepted or rejected and the potential actions the Board may take in mitigation. The School Progression and Awards Board will be provided with outline information but no details of circumstances and any documentation provided are not discussed or shared with the School.
- 6.5. School Progression and Awards Boards will consider students with extenuating circumstances accepted by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee on a case-by-case basis taking into account their full academic profile.
- 6.6. Where the School Progression and Awards Board judges that a student's academic profile has been impacted by their extenuating circumstances, they have a limited range of options available to them and these are outlined in the Taught Student Regulations.
- 6.7. Where the School Progression and Awards Board does not consider a student's academic profile has been impacted by their circumstances, they will return a decision of No Action.
- 6.8. Students should note that the University regulations do not permit the School Progression and Awards Board to simply add marks to a final module outcome or to individual assessments as compensation.

7. Extenuating Circumstances Outcomes

- 7.1. The Extenuating Circumstances Committee will inform the student electronically whether a student's extenuating circumstances application has been accepted or rejected following the Committee reviewing the application.
- 7.2. Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students will be informed electronically of the full outcome of their application for consideration of extenuating circumstances, including confirmation of any mitigation agreed by the School Progression and Awards Board, on the date of their results being published on Campus Connect.
- 7.3. Postgraduate Research Students undertaking taught modules will be informed electronically of the outcome of their application for consideration of extenuating circumstances by the date agreed with their School.

8. Appeals against the outcome of the Extenuating Circumstances Committee

- 8.1. Students cannot appeal against the outcome of an extenuating circumstances application on the basis of the judgement made by the Committee. Further information on what constitutes grounds for appeal against module or degree course outcomes and/or complaints processes can be found on the [Academic Appeals webpage](#):
- 8.2. Failure to read this policy, the [Assessment Guidance for Students](#), the [Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[Guidance for Students](#) and/ or emails informing you of the deadlines for applying for Extenuating Circumstances will not be considered as valid grounds for appeal.

8.3. The private or confidential nature of circumstances will not be accepted later as grounds for appeal

9. Use of Data

The University is committed to handling student data with care and ensuring compliance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, which set out the legislative framework for managing personal data. The University's Data Protection Policy is available to read online [here](#). For more information about your personal data that we collect and use, please see the [Student Data Collection Notice](#).

Policy Schedule	
Policy Title	Extenuating Circumstances Policy for taught degree courses
Policy Owner	Professor Wyn Morgan – Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience)
Policy Lead Contact	Caroline Beck – Director of Student Administration
Approving Body	Academic Board
Date of Approval	04/07/2024
Date of Implementation	2024/25
Version Number	3.0
Review Internal	Annually