

# THE RECORDING WORKSHOP

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## Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

### 1. Policy

#### 1.1 Introduction

During their study students may encounter significant personal difficulties that are outside their control and impact on their ability to study and/or complete assessments. Such difficulties are referred to by the College as Extenuating Circumstances.

Extenuating Circumstances must meet the following criteria:

- They must be out of the student's control – the student could not have prevented them.
- They must have had an impact – they must have had a negative impact on the student's ability to study or to undertake an assessment.
- The timing of the circumstances must be relevant to the claimed impact.

The appropriate management of extenuating circumstances affecting students' study and assessment is significant in ensuring that academic standards are maintained and that students perceive that they are being treated fairly.

This policy is applicable to all types of student on all programmes or courses.

#### 1.2 Types of Circumstance

Two types of circumstances may affect student performance in study and/or assessment:

(a) Long term conditions/disabilities for which adjustments can be put in place to support study and assessment

(b) Shorter term circumstances such as a self-limiting illness which require consideration as and when they arise and may affect study and/or assessment

#### 1.3 Procedures to Follow

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Dependent on whether study and/or assessment has been affected and on the types of circumstance there are different procedures to follow.

## **(a) Long Term Conditions/Disabilities affecting the Ability to Study and/or Comply with Assessment Requirements**

Students who are aware of a disability, long-term medical condition or other long-term circumstances that are expected to have an impact on their performance should make their College aware of those circumstances at the earliest possible opportunity.

In addition they should seek relevant adjustments using the following procedures:

- circumstances affecting assessments: follow the procedural document regarding Assessment Arrangements for Students who have a Disability or Long-term Medical Condition.
- Circumstances affecting study: seek advice to support their study with the principal.

Such arrangements are intended to make full adjustment for the condition/disability so no further adjustment or consideration would be appropriate. It may be appropriate for students to consider voluntarily interrupting their studies whilst arrangements are made and appropriate support is put in place.

If using this procedure, students should ensure that they access relevant support services that are available to them to ensure that all possible assistance is provided.

## **Late Diagnosis of Long Term Medical Conditions/Disabilities**

Where the principal has assessed a student as requiring adjustment to normal arrangements for assessment but it is too close to a scheduled assessment for the adjustment to be put in place for a centrally arranged assessment the College should if possible arrange for the assessment to take place in the College. If this is not possible the student may request deferral of the relevant assessment(s) such that the adjustment can be made to a centrally arranged assessment.

Where diagnosis of a long term medical condition/disability is made after an assessment has taken place it may be appropriate to annul assessments from the current session and allow the student to take them again such that they can gain a properly representative mark or to take the circumstances into account at a final assessment board in accordance with paragraph 2.11.1.1 A (c) of the policy relating to circumstances affecting assessments. Further backdating of any

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adjustment will not occur.

Where diagnosis of a long term medical condition/disability that requires support for study to be put in place is made during the academic year it may be appropriate to allow the student to repeat the relevant year/semester (for which a fee would be payable). Alternatively one of the outcomes from paragraph 3.6 of the policy relating to circumstances affecting study may be applied. Further backdating will not occur.

Where a student has not had appropriate adjustment in the current session for a late diagnosis they should submit an Extenuating Circumstances form as soon as possible. In line with paragraph 2.9 such claims will be considered if submitted within seven days of the affected assessment, and may be considered at the discretion of a College after that time, but will not be considered if submitted more than one month after notification of a progression or award decision.

## **(b) Short-Term Circumstances affecting the Ability to Comply with Assessment Requirements**

Students should follow the Procedure for Students who are Unable to Comply with Assessment Requirements (2 below).

## **(c) Short-Term Circumstances affecting the Ability to Study**

Students should follow the Procedure for Students whose Ability to Study is affected (3 below).

## **1.4 Responsibilities of The college**

The College should ensure that all students are aware of this policy. As a minimum they are expected to include information in their initial induction packs and remind students each year of its existence. This may be done by inclusion in the College/Programme Handbook.

The College should ensure that students are aware of primary contacts for submission of extenuating circumstances claims and should ensure that advice about possible outcomes/consequences is easily available to students. There may be times when the College will need to respond to students in a short timeframe so their procedures must support the ability to do this.

The College should consider and respond to claims as in the procedures below. The college

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should keep complete records of all claims and ensure that they manage and note extensions to deadlines and deferrals of assessment such that relevant College offices are informed of the later assessment.

## 1.5 Responsibilities of Students

1. Students are responsible for ensuring that they inform their College of any circumstances that they consider are affecting their ability to study and/or undertake assessments using the procedures in this policy.
2. Students should note that there are defined timeframes for the submission of claims relating to extenuating circumstances.
3. Students are responsible for providing the required evidence demonstrating their claimed extenuating circumstances.
4. Students should make every effort to ensure that they are fit to study and undertake assessment, and where a student feels that there are circumstances that are affecting them adversely it is their responsibility to seek professional help, where relevant, to assist in resolving the problem.
5. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are available for all necessary study and assessment. A student will be in breach of the College's attendance and engagement requirements if they do not attend an assessment or comply with a coursework deadline and do not submit an extenuating circumstances form, or if that form is deemed by the College to be insincere.

## 1.6 Guidance on Acceptable and Unacceptable Circumstances

Guidance on types of circumstances and whether or not they might be considered as good cause for failing to comply with an assessment requirement is provided in each procedure.

## 1.7 Ongoing Circumstances

Where a student has had extenuating circumstances for one period accepted but continues to be affected by or has a recurrence of the same circumstances, they should seek medical/other advice. If necessary they should either follow the procedure for Students with Long Term Conditions/Disabilities so that appropriate support for study or individual arrangements for assessments can be put in place or discuss with their College the possibility of voluntarily interrupting their studies until the circumstances have been resolved.

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Students may not submit the same extenuating circumstances covering more than one semester except where they have accessed appropriate support to manage the circumstances but there is an unexpected acute episode at a particularly significant time.

Where the circumstances are external to the student and extend over more than one semester, such as chronic illness of a relative, it may be appropriate to accept the same circumstances for a longer period if it is not appropriate for the student to voluntarily interrupt their studies. In such circumstances the student must discuss the situation with their College and submit an extenuating circumstances form each semester to ensure that appropriate account is taken of the circumstances and appropriate support can be offered to the student.

Where a student has suffered from a series of discrete short-term illnesses they should seek medical advice to ascertain whether there is an underlying problem that may require further treatment, and should consider the possibility of an interruption of study.

## 1.8 Formal Complaint

If a student has made, or is making, a complaint under the Complaints Procedure and feels that the matters covered by that complaint may have affected their assessment performance, they should make the College aware in writing of their complaint such that it can be taken into account if appropriate.

## 1.9 Evidence

All claims made under this policy must be supported by evidence as detailed in each procedure. Claims will not be considered if appropriate evidence has not been submitted.

The College has standards relating to evidence as detailed in Appendix 2. All extenuating circumstance claims must comply with these standards.

## 1.10 Confidentiality of Evidence

Confidential information will only be shared within the College for the purposes of implementing this policy in a fair and rigorous manner. Any student wishing to restrict the sharing of such information should make their wishes known to the appropriate members of staff, preferably in writing. Students should be aware that the College cannot respond to a student's circumstances if they remain unaware of relevant information.

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Normally such wishes will be respected unless to do so would be against the best interests of the College community or the interests of safety or security of any person.

## 1.11 Outcomes/Actions

The college should consider all cases individually, satisfying itself whether or not sufficient cause exists, and deciding on the outcome (ie whether or not the claim has been accepted as being with good cause) and actions (ie what will happen where the claim has been accepted) in accordance with the relevant procedure. The final effect of a claim where circumstances have been accepted may not be known for some time but students should be informed what action has been agreed as soon as that decision has been made.

An individual student's marks should not be changed as the result of a claim of extenuating circumstances.

In cases where the assessment process has in some way been disrupted (eg a problem with an assessment paper) appropriate adjustments may be made to the outcomes for the affected cohort, including potentially to marks, by following the College's normal moderation process. In such circumstances the student should not be required to submit a claim for extenuating circumstances.

## 1.12 Informing Students of Outcomes

The college should inform students of the outcomes of claims in writing in a timely and reasonable manner.

## 1.13 Dissatisfaction following a claim of Extenuating Circumstances

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim should first discuss the matter with the College.

If after that discussion a student considers that the College has failed to carry out its duty to act fairly in the application of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy should submit a review request form by email. An initial assessment by Academic Processes will consider whether there may be evidence of procedural irregularity in the way the Extenuating Circumstances claim was handled and whether this directly affected a final decision of an academic body charged with making decisions on assessment, progression and awards. If this is considered to be the case the

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submission will be transferred for consideration under the College's Academic Appeals Policy. In all other cases the Principal (Academic Administration) in the Academic Services Division of the UK campus will undertake a paper-based review acting on behalf of the Quality and Standards Committee and in doing that will consider whether or not the College has acted reasonably. The Principal may refer the case to any other process as appropriate or refer it to the Quality and Standards Committee which may substitute a different decision on behalf of the College as in paragraph 1.14 below.

Requests for Review must be made within one month of the student being notified of the final outcome of their claim for Extenuating Circumstances.

Dependent on the outcome of the review the student may be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter or may request a Completion of Procedures letter such that if they are still dissatisfied with the outcome they may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) providing the complaint is eligible under OIA rules.

## 1.14 Authority

Decisions regarding Extenuating Circumstances are made by the college on behalf of the Quality and Standards Committee. Where a decision has been made that is subsequently subject to appeal or review, as in paragraph 1.13 above, the Quality and Standards Committee may substitute another decision on behalf of the College if they believe the original decision to be unsound.