

UK Graduate College

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (HE and Pathways)

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Who does this policy apply to?

If you are...	Then..
On a programme leading to an award from ATHE, City and Guild or Pearson	All parts of this policy apply.

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1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 Extenuating Circumstances are unforeseen personal difficulties that have a serious impact on a student's ability to perform in or complete an assessment(s). This could include illness or injury that happen around the time of the assessment or preventing attendance at an examination. An application for extenuating circumstances must meet the requirements for independent documentary evidence described below.
- 1.2 This policy does not apply to formative assessments which do not contribute to a module/unit mark. Extensions to the deadlines for the submission of formative assessments should be discussed and agreed informally between the student and their lecturer.
- 1.3 See Annex A for a list of examples of extenuating circumstances and those that do not constitute as extenuating circumstances.

2. **Purpose and Scope**

- 2.1 This policy and procedure explains how UK Graduate College HE and Pathways students may apply for an extension to the deadline for completing an assessment task, or a deferral of an assessment task, due to unexpected and exceptional life events. It also describes how the College will consider applications.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure applies to UK Graduate College HE and Pathways students wishing to apply for an extension or deferral due to extenuating circumstances and College staff who are responsible for teaching and supporting students and considering applications for extenuating circumstances.

- 2.3 This policy is the general UKGC Higher Education and Pathways Division policy on extenuating circumstances, noting that any university-specific policies will be followed as per the contractual arrangements.
3. ***Aims and Objectives***
 - 3.1 To clearly set out the process for students applying for extenuating circumstances.
 - 3.2 To clearly set out the examples of what constitutes an extenuating circumstance or not.
4. ***Application process***
 - 4.1 Students must complete the Extenuating Circumstances Form as far in advance of the assessment deadline or examination date as possible. Applications submitted after the deadline or examination date will only be accepted in the most exceptional cases, for example where the student can demonstrate (and evidence) that they were unable to apply beforehand. Applications submitted after the formal publication of results from the assessment or examination will not be accepted under any circumstances, however students could apply under the Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures (HE and Pathways). Please see process outline Annex D.
 - 4.2 If the student is unable to complete the application form, for instance because they have suffered an injury on the day of the examination, the student, or a friend or family member, should contact a member of the Student Support team who may complete the application on the student's behalf. The student will then be required to provide independent evidence as soon as possible to support the application.
 - 4.3 The application form asks the student how long they expect the Extenuating Circumstance to last for. This will inform the decision by the College about whether to grant an extension or deferral.
 - 4.4 The College does not normally consider medical certificates for longstanding, managed conditions or illness as mitigation for poor performance. This is because students would normally have had the benefit of experience, medical knowledge or help to manage the condition and would have had the opportunity to register with the College's disability support team to gain access to appropriate study support and to agree reasonable adjustments, enabling them to be assessed without disadvantage.
5. ***Evidence***
 - 5.1 Students with Extenuating Circumstances are permitted to self-certify those circumstances for a maximum of two assessments in any one academic year, providing students with a 5 day extension. The circumstances which are being self-certified must meet the definition of Extenuating Circumstances set out in Annex A. All self-certifications need to be applied for by completing Annex C and will be considered by the Quality team and recorded by the Registry team on the student's record.
 - 5.2 Students may self-certify for a first submission or sitting and/or a resubmission. However, students may not self-certify an application for the same assessment twice (i.e., to extend a previously self-certified extension).
 - 5.3 Where a student seeks to self-certify an Extenuating Circumstances application for one or two assessments in a broader set of assessments, the student must explain

why the Extenuating Circumstances have impacted some assessments and not others.

- 5.4 Where a student seeks to apply for an extension to, or deferral of, a third assessment in any one academic year (or fourth, or fifth, etc.), or where the first application covers more than two assessments, the application must be supported by independent documentary evidence. Evidence must be obtained when the Extenuating Circumstances are present. Post-dated evidence will not be accepted unless it can be demonstrated that the evidence could not have been obtained at the time.
- 5.5 Independent evidence should be written and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstance, its dates and/or duration and, where possible, its impact. An appropriate third party would be one who knows the student in a professional capacity or one who can verify the circumstance from a position of authority, for example a doctor; and who is able to provide objective and impartial evidence. The College reserves the right to check on the validity of the evidence submitted by contacting the third party directly.
- 5.6 All evidence must be provided in English. If the documentary evidence is not in English, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that it is translated by an accredited translator.
- 5.7 A student must submit medical evidence in support of an Extenuating Circumstance claim related to illness. Any medical certificates/notes must:
- Relate specifically to the dates and duration of the illness;
 - Contain a clear medical diagnosis or opinion and not merely report the claim that the student felt unwell; nor report any claim that there was reason to believe that the student was ill.
- 5.8 If a student submits a falsified fit note from a doctor, they will be referred to the Student Disciplinary Procedure for further investigation.

6. *How the College considers Extenuating Circumstances*

- 6.1 Other than self-certification applications, Extenuating Circumstances applications are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel that meets regularly ahead of the Programme/Exam Board.
- 6.2 In reaching their decision, the Panel shall take account of:
- whether the Extenuating Circumstances provided are genuinely circumstances beyond the student's control, or ability to foresee, and whether they may seriously impair/have impaired the student's assessment attempt;
 - the severity of the event or circumstance;
 - the length of time it lasted;
 - the closeness in time of the event or circumstance to the assessment(s);
 - whether all/other assessment(s) might be equally affected;
 - the strength of the evidence submitted (unless the application is self-certified).
- 6.3 Decisions taken through the Extenuating Circumstances policy shall be reported to the relevant Programme/Exam Board.
- 6.4 A record shall be kept of all cases considered through the Extenuating Circumstances procedure, along with the decisions made. Extenuating Circumstances documentation will be retained on the student record. An annual report on the

operation of this procedure and an analysis of applications shall be submitted to the Academic Board.

7. Notification of outcome

7.1 Normally, a student shall be notified of the outcome of an application for Extenuating Circumstances by the Secretary of the Panel within five days of the Panel convening and the independent evidence specified above.

7.2 The outcomes available to the Panel are:

- To accept the application for Extenuating Circumstances and grant an extension or deferral of the assessment or examination to the next available opportunity; both routes will lead to the mark being uncapped;
- To request further evidence;
- To reject the application.

7.3 Where the application is accepted, the outcome will include details of the deferral which has been granted:

- An extension is defined as permission to hand in an assessment after the published deadline and without being capped. The standard extension period for an extenuating circumstance is five working days.
- A deferral is defined as permission to delay an assessment task for longer, normally into the next semester. A deferred examination involves taking the equivalent examination at the next opportunity when the module is taught; this would normally, but not always, be in the next semester. Deferral of coursework means that the student may only be considered for confirmation of grades, progression or award at the next available Programme/Exam Board.

7.4 If a student makes an application less than five days before the assessment deadline or examination date, they should endeavour to submit the assessment on time or attend the examination. If the application is subsequently accepted, then the first attempt at the assessment or examination may be annulled and a deferral granted, which will allow the student to make a second attempt without being capped. However, if the application is subsequently rejected, then the student's first attempt will be counted.

7.5 A student who makes multiple applications for Extenuating Circumstances because of ill health may be referred to the Fitness to Study Procedure.

8. Appeals

8.1 The student has a right of appeal against the rejection of an application for Extenuating Circumstances using the Non-Academic Appeals Procedure. The student must use the Non-Academic Appeals Form, clearly stating their reasons for appealing, why they are dissatisfied with the rejection of the extenuating circumstances application and provide any evidence to support their appeal.

8.2 Appeals should be made within 10 days of the date they were notified of the decision detailing the fact that they are appealing and their grounds for doing so.

8.3 Please visit the website policies page and download the relevant form - <https://www.ukgraduate.org.uk/policies>

Annex A – Examples of Extenuating Circumstances

Examples of what the College would normally consider valid Extenuating Circumstances are:

- Illness or injury such as flu, gastroenteritis or a broken arm;
- Death or unexpected serious illness of a close friend or close family member;
- A worsening of a long-term health condition such as depression;
- Personal problems, for example, court proceedings or separation from a partner;
- Being the victim of a serious crime, such as assault or burglary;
- Illness on the day of an exam, for example, food poisoning, or tonsillitis;
- Serious, unexpected transport delays on the way to an examination;
- Severe, unexpected and unpreventable financial difficulties.

Examples of what the College would not normally consider valid Extenuating Circumstances are those where a student could reasonably have avoided the situation, or acted to limit the impact of the circumstances:

- Missing an assessment deadline due to a misunderstanding or mix up;
- IT problems causing a student to lose work; students are expected to take appropriate precautions to back work up;
- Long-standing appointments (e.g. medical or legal) that could be rearranged;
- Misreading an examination timetable;
- House moves, holidays or celebrations where the student either has control over the date or could choose not to attend;
- A long-standing condition for which the student is receiving support for via the Student Support team;
- Financial difficulties that are not severe, unexpected or unpreventable;
- Issues that the College is responsible for, for example, the unavailability of an examination room. Issues like these will be dealt with by the College under different procedures.

Annex B - Extenuating Circumstances Form

This form relates to extenuating circumstances affecting performance in assessment. Please submit a copy of this form, including any evidence to quality@ukgraduate.ac.uk

Section 1:

Name	
Student ID	
Email address	
Programme of study	
Cohort	
Date of application	

Section 2:

Please list the assessments to which the extenuating circumstances relate. All sections must be completed prior to submission.

Module Name	Module code	Assessment Name	Assessment Deadline Date

Section 3:

Please explain in the box below the reason(s) that your performance in the assessment(s) was affected by extenuating circumstances.

Section 4:

Please list below the evidence included to support your extenuating circumstance application. This evidence will remain confidential and will only be used by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

Examples of evidence include scans of official letters from e.g. medical professionals, legal professionals.

What happens next?

Once you have submitted your request, the Extenuating Circumstances form and any evidence, your application will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel. The outcomes available to the Panel are:

- To accept the application for Extenuating Circumstances and grant an extension or deferral of the assessment or examination to the next available opportunity; both routes will lead to the mark being uncapped;
- To request further evidence;
- To reject the application.

If your Extenuating Circumstances request is not accepted, then a reason will be given. You will be notified of the decision made by the panel by the Quality team.

Any **accepted** Extenuating Circumstances requests will be communicated to the Programme/Exam Board which considers your results. Your difficulties will be taken into consideration when deciding the outcome of your results and you should not be penalised for adverse performance in any relevant assessments.

For Office Use Only

Application considered at panel on	DD/MM/YY
Panel Decision	
Revised submission date (if appropriate)	
Date communicated via email to student and module leader	
Confirm student records updated	

Annex C - Self Certification Form

This form relates to extenuating circumstances affecting performance in assessment. Please submit a copy of this form to quality@ukgraduate.ac.uk from your student email address.

Section 1:

Name	
Student ID	
Email address	
Programme of study	
Cohort	
Date of application	

Section 2:

Please list the assessments to which the extenuating circumstances relate. All sections must be completed prior to submission, with the requested revised deadline within 5 working days of the summative submission deadline.

Module Name	Module code	Assessment Name	Assessment Deadline Date	

Section 3

Have you used self-certification for any other units this year? **Yes / No (delete as applicable)**

You are entitled to self-certify for 2 assessments a year. Once used, Annex B should be completed and evidence provided.

Section 4:

Please explain in the box below the reason(s) that your performance in the assessment(s) was affected by extenuating circumstances.

If your Extenuating Circumstances request is not accepted, then a reason will be given. You will be notified of the decision made by the panel by the Quality team.

For Office Use Only

Eligibility for self-certification confirmed and approved	DD/MM/YY
Revised submission date (if appropriate)	
Date communicated via email to student and module leader	
Confirm student records updated	

Annex D: Extenuating Circumstance and Extension Process

Student identifies and communicates a difficulty in meeting an assessment deadline to the Programme Leader

Question: Do the circumstances warrant a request to delay the assessment to a later submission date due to the difficulties the student is facing / has faced?

Option 1:

Is the student eligible to self-certificate and will the delay to the submission of the assessment be possible within the next 5 working days?

Option 2:

Has the student used there self-certification opportunities or will the delay to the submission of the assessment not be possible within the next ten working days?

**Answer: Yes
Two Options**

Option 1:

Student completes Annex C to self-certificate and apply for a 5 day extension deadline before the summative submission deadline.

Option 2:

Student completes an application for extenuating circumstances and submits before the assessment deadline unless there are exceptional circumstances the student can evidence.

Option 1:

If the extension is approved, a new submission date will be communicated to the student dependant on the type of evidence submitted.

Option 2:

If the request for extenuating circumstances is approved, a new submission date will be communicated to the student

All students must be aware there is no guarantee that an application for an extension or additional consideration will be approved.