

Issue Date:	November 2017
Approved by:	Approved by the Executive November 2017
Review Date:	November 2019



POLICY STATEMENT NO. 119

TITLE: **Extenuating Circumstances Procedure**

DESCRIPTION:

The College policy on assessment submission on or before published hand-in dates is strictly applied. However, from time to time unforeseen events, such as illness, may arise which prevent students from completing assessments within the time allowed or impact adversely on the quality of the assessment submitted. Such events are referred to as extenuating circumstances. This procedure encompasses the processes of application for extenuating circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 There may be occasion during a student's academic journey when circumstances arise that prevent timely submission of assessed work, attendance of examinations or impact on assessment performance. Such extenuating circumstances are defined as serious adverse circumstances of limited duration which could not reasonably have been foreseen. The criteria are defined as:
 - a) *Serious adverse circumstance.* The events described should be sufficiently serious to mean that it would not be reasonable to expect a student to complete an assignment by the published hand-in date. Minor ailments and mishaps are not likely to meet this criterion.
 - b) *Limited duration.* There is an expectation that the usual pattern of study will be resumed after a relatively short period. In more serious cases, where there is likely to be prolonged interruption of normal activity, suspension of studies (intercalation) may be appropriate until the circumstances have been resolved. Chronic illness and disability are not treated as extenuating circumstances, unless newly diagnosed or in an acute phase.
 - c) *Not reasonably have been foreseen.* Assignment submission dates are normally published well in advance. There is, therefore, an expectation that students exercise due foresight in organising workload.

If such extenuating circumstances arise, students may apply for consideration, the process and procedure of which is provided within this Procedure.

PANEL CONSTITUTION AND AUTHORITY

- 2 All applications are considered by a Panel which will normally comprise of:
 - a. Head of Department or Director of Learning
 - b. A HE lecturer who does not have a direct connection to cases under consideration,

c. Head of Higher Education

The Panel has the authority to make one of the following decisions on each case presented, to either:

- a. support the application, and make recommendation to the Module Board of Examiners,
- b. reject the application,
- c. defer decision pending further evidence.

Where a unanimous decision cannot be reached then a majority decision can be taken, the Chair in this instance would hold the casting vote.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCE & MITIGATION

3 Application

1. Students who wish to inform the College of circumstances which they feel may have affected their performance in assessment or led to them being absent from an examination should make an application for consideration of extenuating circumstances.
2. Exceptionally, where a student has been unable to submit an assignment on time and were unable to request an extension in advance they may request mitigation.
3. Applications must be submitted on the appropriate form (attached) and must be supported by corroborating evidence which can include:
 - a. Medical evidence e.g. letter from a doctor, nurse or other professional practitioner, confirmation of appointment, prescription, a completed Medical/Professional Practitioner Support Note, etc.
 - b. Supporting statement(s) from Programme Leader and/or tutor
 - c. Other verifiable evidence e.g. police incident/crime number.
4. Application for consideration of extenuating circumstances, or a request for mitigation, should normally be made no later than 7 days after the assessment hand-in date.
5. On application students may request one, or a combination of the following outcomes:
 - a. The existing grade for an assignment is set aside and a fresh attempt is allowed,
 - b. A failing grade for the module is disregarded and a fresh attempt for all or part of the overall assessment strategy is allowed,
 - c. Consideration of the circumstances is taken into account together with the students overall mark profile in determining his/her overall grade.
6. Applications must be submitted to the Head of Higher Education.
7. All applications must be treated in strict confidence.

Notification of Outcome

8. The student and appropriate Programme Leader will normally be notified in writing within two working days of the Panel decision.
9. Where the Panel supports the application the decision of outcome and recommendation will be passed to the Board of Examiners who will:
 - a. Apply the recommendation, (*unless the Board is satisfied that there is a compelling reason to make an alternative decision in which case the reason for that decision must be minuted*).
 - b. Decide that no action is required
10. Where applications are deferred pending further evidence the student will be given a date of submission for further evidence. If no further evidence is provided by the given date the case will be returned to the next available Panel where a default decision of "reject" will be recorded.
11. Where applications are rejected the original mark for the assignment(s) will stand or a mark of zero will be recorded for non-attendance of an exam or non-submission of the assignment(s).

IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

This policy has been assessed and considered for impact upon people who share the following protected characteristics and factors: race, gender and gender identity, disability (including learning difficulty), religion and belief, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy, maternity and marital status.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY:

This policy has been impact assessed and has identified the following:

- Negative impacts (Y)
- Appropriate actions/mitigations to address the negative impacts have been put in place (Y)
- Positive impacts (Y)

For further detail of the impacts and associated actions, please see the EIA which is attached to the filed copy of this document.

LINKED POLICIES:

MONITORING PROCEDURE:

DATE FOR REVIEW:

November 2019

RESPONSIBILITY:

Head of Higher Education

ENDORSED BY EXECUTIVE:

J. Meenaghan

Principal

7 December 2017 Date

Extenuating Circumstances Application

This form should be used if you wish to inform the College of circumstances which you feel may have affected your performance in assessments or led to you being absent from an examination. Exceptionally, you may use this form to request mitigation where you have been unable to submit an assignment on time and were unable to request an extension in advance.

The deadline for claiming extenuating circumstances is normally 7 days after the assessment hand in date. If your application is submitted after that time you must ensure that Section 6 is completed.

Before completing this form, please ensure that you read the guidance notes attached and the Procedure on Extenuating Circumstances.

All sections must be completed and the form returned, with corroborating evidence attached to the Head of Higher Education

Section 1

Full Name (please print)			
Programme of study			
Subject (if applicable)			
Current year of study		Full or Part-time	

Section 2

Details of assessment(s) affected, please clearly state each assessment you believe has been affected, assessments not listed will not be considered.

Module code	Module Title	Assessment Affected	Date of Assessment

Section 3 – Your circumstances

Use this space to fully describe the circumstances that have affected you. You must include as much detail as is necessary including the exact dates of the events described so that a decision can be reached based on full information. All applications are treated in strict confidence.

Section 4 – Effect on assessment

Describe clearly how the circumstances affected your ability to prepare for, or undertake the assessments listed in Section 2.

Section 5 – Corroborating Evidence

What evidence are you including in support of this application? **Evidence is required for the circumstances, their effect on your assessment and, if necessary, the reason why the application is late.** For medical circumstances evidence may be a letter from a doctor or nurse, confirmation of an appointment, prescription etc. If no medical evidence is available you may wish to use Appendix 1 to request information from a medical professional. Securely attach all evidence to this form.

Section 6 – Late Submission

Applications made more than 7 days after the assessment submission deadline are not normally considered. You must indicate here why it was not possible to raise these circumstances within 7 days of your assessment?

Section 7 – Decision Requested

I request that the Panel take the following decision:

1.	Set aside any existing grades for the assignment(s) specified and allow me to undertake the assessment as though for the first time.	
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(select either 1 or 2, not both)

2.	In the event of my being awarded a failing grade for the module(s) specified, allow me to undertake the assessment as though for the first time.	
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See Guidance Notes

3.	Take account of the information provided together with my overall mark profile in determining my overall grade.	
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Section 8 – Declaration

I declare that I have read and understood this form before completing it, and that the information provided on and with this form is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Student signature		Date	
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Extenuating Circumstances Guidance Notes

Extenuating circumstances are defined as *serious adverse circumstances* of limited duration which could not reasonably have been foreseen. Before putting forward your application you should consider carefully whether it rests upon grounds that satisfy these criteria:

- a. There must be serious adverse circumstances. The events you are describing should be sufficiently serious to mean that it would not be reasonable to expect you to complete the assignment(s) by the due date. Minor ailments and mishaps are not likely to meet this criterion.
- b. The circumstances must be of *limited duration*. In other words there must be an expectation that you will be able to resume your usual pattern of study after a relatively short period. In more serious cases where there is likely to be prolonged interruption of normal activity, you should discuss with your Programme Leader whether it would be appropriate to suspend your studies (intercalate) until your circumstances have been resolved. Chronic illness and disability are not treated as extenuating circumstances, unless newly diagnosed or in an acute phase. In such cases you should seek the support that you need to pursue your course of study successfully rather than requesting to defer assessment or re-assessment.
- c. The circumstances must be such that they could *not reasonably have been foreseen*. You will be notified of the date of submission for assignments well in advance. There is, therefore, an expectation that you will exercise due foresight in organising your work.
- d. **When submitting an application, you are strongly advised to personally deliver it to the Head of HE, where you will have the opportunity to discuss your circumstances and the most appropriate form of evidence that could be submitted to support your application.**

Computer/IT failure of student's own equipment is not normally acceptable as grounds for claiming extenuating circumstances:

A written testimony from your Programme Leader can be submitted in support of your application.

Section 7 – Decision Requested:

You should only initially select either option 1 or 2. Option 3 may also be selected if you wish the Examination Board to consider the circumstances applied for when determining your overall grade, if accepted.

Section 8 – Declaration

You **must** read and sign this section.

On completion of this form you are advised to make a copy for your own records and submit the original form to the Head of Higher Education

If your circumstances are **not** accepted:

The original mark for the assignment(s) will stand, or you will receive a mark of 0 for non-attendance or non-submission. You **cannot** appeal against the decision made by the

Extenuating Circumstances Panel. If additional evidence has become available, you need to submit a new application.

If your circumstances are accepted:

The decision will be passed to the Board of Examiners who will decide to either:

- Apply the Panel recommendation,
- Decide that the circumstances do not require any action

Medical/Professional Practitioner Support Note

Students claiming extenuating circumstances relating to assessments must complete form ECA 1 and attach all relevant evidence. Evidence can include prescriptions, appointment letters, letters from medical professionals, etc. Where this evidence is not available, students may use this form to request their GP or other medical professional to assist in providing evidence.

To be completed by a Doctor/Professional practitioner:

Thank you for assisting the College by certifying this student's condition/illness. The student should have communicated to you the effect of this on his/her academic performance. We would be grateful for any comments you are able to make on the condition/illness. Please return the completed form to the student as soon as possible.

Student's name:	
Doctor/Practitioners name:	
Surgery/practice:	
Nature of condition/clinical diagnosis:	
Please comment on the likely impact of the illness on the students' performance in, or preparation for academic assessment:	

Doctor/Practitioner's signature:		Date:	
Practice stamp:			

If you would prefer to certify this illness in the form of a letter to the College or standard 'fit note' please do so by providing this to the student to present to the College.

Please Note:

The College does not require medical evidence to support student absence from University for short periods. However, in cases where the student is requesting special treatment in relation to their examinations and other formal assessments, we do require confirmation of the illness and where possible, the effect on their performance. This is to ensure that students are treated equitably in their assessments and to ensure the standards of our awards.

ECA FORM 2