

# Extenuating Circumstances

## Regulations for Partners

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# Extenuating Circumstances

## 1 Preamble

- 1.1 It is recognised that a student may experience temporary personal difficulties outside of their control which may have a detrimental effect on their ability to study for and/or complete an assessment<sup>1</sup> by the set deadline. Such situations are referred to as “extenuating circumstances” (ECs).
- 1.2 These Regulations are designed to ensure that, as far as possible, no student subject to ECs is unfairly disadvantaged whilst maintaining the academic standards of the University. The Regulations specify the core principles relating to ECs (§2), a definition of “extenuating circumstances” (§§3 and 5), potential remedial outcomes for students experiencing ECs (§6) and the procedural framework within which ECs are managed (§§4 and 7).
- 1.3 These Regulations apply to undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) summative assessment.
- 1.4 The Regulations do not cover ongoing medical conditions/disabilities (including learning disabilities or mental health conditions) for which the student is already receiving formally approved adjustments unless there is an exacerbation of the condition/disability or an indication that the approved adjustments are no longer sufficient or have not been provided.
- 1.5 The Regulations are consistent with the precepts and expectations contained in the Quality Assurance Agency’s (QAA) *Chapter B6 – Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning* of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (2013) and the recommendations and guidance contained in the Academic Registrars’ Council’s (ARC) *A Reference Document on Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances for University Practitioners* (2011).<sup>2</sup>
- 1.6 It is important for students to understand the following:
  - a) That they should do everything possible to meet deadlines, submit work on time and complete assessments and only apply for extenuating circumstances as a last resort if there is something genuinely out of their control, which they could not expect to

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<sup>1</sup> The Regulations only apply to summative and not formative assessments. A summative assessment is defined as work that is taken into account by a Board of Examiners for the purposes of progression and/or for an award. Formative coursework is defined as work that is not taken into account by a Board of Examiners for the purposes of progression and/or for an award. Extension requests for formative assessments are at the discretion of the Module Organiser.

<sup>2</sup> <https://arc.ac.uk/uploadedfiles/documents/ARCAppealsExtCircs.pdf>

happen, that interferes with being able to take or complete an assessment. EC requests are not a way of managing multiple deadlines or the day-to-day complexities of life.

- b) That EC requests are not a way of improving a mark through a second chance if the student does not achieve what they had hoped. The recognition of ECs also cannot be used to change a received mark or remove the need to complete any necessary assessment since students still need to demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes of the course /module(s).
  - c) That applying for extenuating circumstances gives students the opportunity to request more time to complete an assessment. It is not a means of requesting or obtaining support.
  - d) That students seeking to gain an advantage or benefit through the provision of false or misleading information relating to ECs are liable to action being taken against them under the Institution's Disciplinary Procedures.
  - e) That consideration of ECs will be treated confidentially with disclosure of details only made to the smallest number of people necessary to progress the application.
- 1.7 Students are advised to read this policy and any associated guidance early in the academic year. This means that if something happens to cause worry about an assessment, students will know what they can do and where to find information.
- 1.8 Students should read the Institution's relevant policy or regulation for the submission of assessment which will explain rules about submitting coursework late with or without extenuating circumstances.
- 1.9 Terms of Reference
- a) Capped: means that the maximum mark that can be awarded is the pass mark for the module (i.e., 40% for UG or 50% for PGT).
  - b) Deadline Submission: is the deadline for 'deadline' assessments e.g., Coursework, Written Assignment, Dissertation, Project.
  - c) Delayed Assessment: is a delayed attempt (uncapped) for a Deadline Submission.
  - d) Deferred Event: is the deferred attempt (uncapped) of an 'event assessment' e.g., Laboratory Demonstration, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), Objective Structured Pharmacy Examination (OSPE), Presentation, Course Test and Examination).

- e) EC: is an extenuating circumstance which is defined as a temporary personal difficulty outside of your control, which may have a detrimental effect on your ability to study for and/or complete assessments.
- f) ECP: Is the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Each partner institution has an Extenuating Circumstances Panel appointed to consider extenuating circumstances.
- g) ECR: is a request for extenuating circumstances where evidence is required.
- h) Event Date: is the date of an 'event assessment' e.g., Laboratory Demonstration, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), Objective Structured Pharmacy Examination (OSPE), Presentation, Course Test and Examination).
- i) Uncapped: means that you will retain the mark you are awarded (the mark will not be capped at the pass mark).

## **2 Principles**

2.1 The following principles underpin the Regulations on, and management of, extenuating circumstances (ECs):

- a) That any student who has demonstrated ECs relating to either Deadline or Event summative assessments<sup>3</sup> should not be unfairly disadvantaged;
- b) That the remedies associated with ECs maintain the institution's integrity and academic standards and do not disproportionately advantage the affected student over the rest of the student body;
- c) That the treatment of ECs across the institution should be equitable and consistent, with the use of discretion only used where necessary;
- d) That, notwithstanding (c), a degree of discretion is preserved in the management of ECs since similar circumstances may have different impacts on individual students. Discretion should be exercised in accordance with principles/considerations outlined in §3.6;
- e) That where discretion is used, it should be applied (i) consistently as a form of established precedent and (ii) only in exceptional cases;
- f) That it is the responsibility of the student to apply for a remedy or adjustment based on an EC (including the provision of supporting evidence) at the earliest opportunity possible and before the Deadline Submission or Event Date;

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<sup>3</sup> 'Deadline' assessments include Coursework, Written Assignments, Dissertations, and Projects. 'Event' assessments include Laboratory Demonstrations and other forms of practical, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE), Objective Structured Pharmacy Examinations (OSPE), Presentations, Course Tests and Examinations.

- g) That students seeking to gain an advantage or benefit through the provision of false or misleading information relating to ECs are liable to action(s) being taken against them under the institution's relevant disciplinary policy and procedures;
- h) That the recognition of ECs cannot be used to change a received mark or remove the need to complete the assessment since students still need to demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes of the course/module(s);
- i) That consideration of ECs will be treated confidentially with disclosure of details only made to the smallest number of people necessary to progress the application;
- j) That all EC processes will be expedited as quickly as possible;

### **3 Extenuating Circumstances**

3.1 For the purposes of these Regulations, an extenuating circumstance (EC) is narrowly characterised by the negative impact of the reported event or state of affairs on the student's capacity to perform to the best of their ability with respect to an individual assessment or assessments rather than the effect on other aspects of the student's life.

3.2 To qualify as an EC each of the following conditions must be met:

- a) The situation must have been unforeseeable, i.e. untypical of customary day-to-day experience, and/or beyond the student's control;
- b) The situation must have been such as to be reasonably judged to have had a significant negative impact on the student's ability to undertake the assessment(s) to the best of their capabilities;
- c) The situation should normally have occurred at a time close enough to the assessment(s) submission deadline or Event date such that there was insufficient time to resolve the impact of the experienced difficulties. The precise length of this time will depend upon the nature and severity of the ECs and the type of assessment but would usually be expected to be no longer than 3 weeks before the assessment submission deadline or Event date;
- d) The reporting of the situation must, where it can be reasonably acquired, be corroborated by independent evidence provided by appropriately qualified individuals.

For example:

*Elise has recently separated from her partner and is currently staying with a friend. Due to the upset and upheaval that she is experiencing, she has struggled to focus on assessments. She has asked for a two-week extension but doesn't know what type of evidence she can provide in the circumstances other than a statement from her Academic Adviser or friend who are aware of the circumstances.*

✓ The request is approved on the basis of a supporting statement from the Academic Adviser as any other form of third-party evidence cannot be reasonably acquired, at this stage, in the circumstances.

3.3 The following **non-exhaustive** list of examples provides a guide as to the type of cases that are **likely** to satisfactorily meet each of the criteria listed in §3.2:

- a) Bereavement – the recent death of a close relative or significant other (of a nature which, in the employment context, would permit compassionate leave). The following relatives are understood as ‘close’: partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent and grandchild. At the institution’s discretion, more distant relatives and significant friends may also be considered ‘close’ upon the receipt of a personal statement/self-testimony;
- b) A serious short-term illness, accident or mental health crisis (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have permitted a sick-leave absence);
- c) A disability or long-term health condition (for which adjustments may already be formally in place) worsening either temporarily or on a more enduring basis, or which has been exacerbated by the reported circumstances (where reasonable adjustments provided include ‘renegotiated deadlines due to disability related reasons’, extension requests of up to 7 calendar days can be submitted without further supporting evidence);
- d) A long-term health condition where reasonable adjustments have been applied for but are not yet in place and where the responsibility for the delay lies with the institution;
- e) Being a recent victim of a serious crime;
- f) Situations of the type where a student might be granted an authorised leave of absence and where the date cannot be changed. These may include:
  - (i) involvement in legal processes (e.g. jury service, court summons);
  - (ii) health appointments (not covered by (b) or (c) above);
  - (iii) an interview for a graduate-level job or further academic studies.

These circumstances should be assessed with caution since they must be of such a nature as to significantly detract from the student’s ability to fulfil the assessment to the best of their ability. It should be noted that applications for authorised leave of absence are not automatically granted.

- g) Representative participation in a national or international cultural or sports event;
- h) Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties, e.g. major transport incidents, cancelled flights or other forms of long-distance public transport without adequate notice, dangerous weather conditions where official advice was not to travel;
- i) Significant adverse personal/family circumstances for which there is evidence of undue stress caused or the need to assume extra responsibilities;

- j) Moving house (e.g. where timing of move/completion of house sale is changeable or unknown) or eviction;
- k) Technical problems attributable wholly to a failure of the institutions systems at the point of submission of coursework or during an event assessment;
- l) Delays affecting placements, apprenticeships or assessments, which are outside of the students' control, providing evidence is received by the relevant member of academic staff or employer as appropriate e.g.
  - i. Delays in approval of Assessment of Practice (AOP) (i.e. placement mentor/work-place tutor unavailability)
  - ii. Delays in collection of data or availability of equipment
- m) Commitments related to paid employment or other non-course related activities for part-time students whose primary commitment is not limited to studies, e.g. employment related activities, which are unavoidable or cannot be rescheduled will be considered if third party evidence is provided by the employer/work-based supervisor confirming that the work related activity is impacting on the student's studies. A supporting statement from the Course Director or equivalent will be accepted on the basis that the Course Director can verify the work-related circumstance and is in contact with the employer/work-place supervisor about the students' progress. Examples include:
  - (i) inability to accrue required work-place hours that contribute to assessment (for professional courses);
  - (ii) unplanned change in work requirements (e.g. shift changes for professional courses);
  - (iii) additional workload e.g. requirement to attend a business trip or undertake a significant workplace course or project

For example:

*Joe is employed full-time as a business consultant and is studying on part-time basis. His boss has asked that he takes on an additional project which was formerly looked after by a colleague who has recently left the company. The timeframe for completion of the project is short and will generate a significant additional workload for him which means he will have less time to complete his assessment due to be submitted in 2 weeks' time. His boss writes a letter to support a request for an extension. The Course Director is also aware and provides an email in support of the request.*

✓ The EC is approved on the basis that the student has evidenced additional commitments related to paid employment which are unavoidable, cannot be rescheduled and which are impacting on the student's time to study.

For example:

*April is employed full-time as a pharmacist and is studying on part-time basis. A requirement of her course is to accrue and record evidence of 90 hours of clinical practice for her Portfolio submission. Both she and her workplace supervisor have had other commitments in the workplace, and she is subsequently struggling to accrue the required hours and the deadline for submission is now not far away. She applies for an extension. The Course Director confirms that they have been in touch with the student and workplace supervisor and that a plan is in place to complete work and it is appropriate for the student to have more time.*

✓ The ECP approves the request on the basis that the student has been unable to accrue the required hours to demonstrate learning in practice and the Course Director is aware of the circumstances affecting the student and is in touch with the student and workplace supervisor to monitor progress.

3.4 The following **non-exhaustive** list of examples illustrates instances of the type of circumstance that are **unlikely** to meet each of the criteria in §3.2:

- a) A disability or long-term health condition for which the student is already formally receiving reasonable and appropriate adjustments, and which has not worsened temporarily or on an enduring basis and/or been exacerbated by the reported circumstances;
- b) Claim of any event or state of affairs having a negative impact on the student which could reasonably be viewed as foreseeable or preventable;
- c) Claim of an event or state of affairs having a negative impact on the student:
  - (i) without corroborating evidence from an appropriate professional source, e.g. doctor or other health professional, police, legal communication, etc., where such evidence may be reasonably assumed to be available (supportive letters from family and friends will not typically constitute acceptable evidence where those above might be reasonably assumed to be available);

AND/OR

- (ii) only supported by unsubstantiated evidence, e.g. a doctor's note which states that the student was seen after the illness occurred and that the student had only self-reported the illness and where they might have reasonably be expected to seek help at that time (excludes circumstances whereby the nature of the them precludes disclosure/help seeking at the time but for which support is now being sought);

AND/OR

- (iii) the evidence provided does not make reference to the circumstances or time when the student reports to have been affected by the declared ECs

- d) Claim of an event or state of affairs, the impact of which occurred normally more than three weeks previous to the relevant assessment event or submission deadline unless it can be reasonably argued that this longer period was insufficient time to resolve the impact of the experienced difficulties;
- e) A minor illness or ailment which in a work situation would be unlikely to lead to absence from work;
- f) Pregnancy except:
  - (i) where there are complications relating to the pregnancy which medical evidence can substantiate; and
  - (ii) for a period of two weeks immediately following the delivery in accordance with Statutory Maternity rules at: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave/leave>
- g) Levels of coursework and/or examination stress typically experienced;
- h) Lack of knowledge of Academic Regulations including claims that the student was unaware of (or misread) the dates or times of deadline submission or examination sittings;
- i) Financial issues, other than exceptional hardship or where significant impact is demonstrated;
- j) Where a student is studying full-time, commitments related to paid employment and non-course related internships or activities;

For example:

*Jan is an international student studying a full-time Masters and is working on his final assessment – the Dissertation write-up. He has an opportunity to go into full-time employment before his course end date. The job enables him to use the skills and knowledge he has acquired during his studies and he does not want to pass on the opportunity, but he won't have time to both work full-time and complete the Dissertation write-up by the deadline. He requests an extension.*

× The ECP reject the request on the basis that (a) the student is studying on a full-time basis until the final assessment has been submitted or the course end date has passed, (b) as a Tier 4 visa holder, the student is restricted to 20 hours employment per week until the official end date of the course.

- k) Planned appointments including health and legal appointments which can be readily rescheduled;
- l) Planned appointments with Student Services or equivalent external services that can be readily rescheduled;

- m) Observance of a religious festival (including pilgrimage) or holy day. With regards to Deadline submission dates are typically set early enough for the student to be able to work around religious observance. If the observance conflicts with an Event assessment, the institution will take all reasonable measures to accommodate the student but where this is not possible, the student will be expected to attend at the set time and will not be permitted a Delayed Assessment;
- n) Holidays and/or other social occasions and commitments (including weddings and baptisms) unless these have been arranged prior to commencement to the programme and/or a prior agreement is in place with the Course;
- o) Instances of common every-day travel problems, such as traffic congestion which may be reasonably anticipated;
- p) Inadequate academic practice (unless accounted for by ECs) such as poor time management and planning, especially in relation to bunches deadlines;
- q) The language of assessment was not the student's main language.

3.5 The following non-exhaustive list of examples illustrates instances of the type of circumstance where human error or unanticipated, isolated events may occur and where discretion can be exercised in accordance with principles/considerations outlined in 4:

- a) Unanticipated personal computer/printer/internet problems immediately prior to a deadline;
- b) Failure to backup electronic documents leading to an isolated incident of delayed submission;
- c) Late submission of work due to an incident of unplanned human error/ oversight;
- d) An incidence of accidental submission of an incorrect document, e.g. an assignment for another module, an incomplete earlier draft of the assignment, a corrupt document, or a paper submission to the incorrect drop-box; (typically the student would be able to spontaneously rectify by production of a correct version)
- e) Failure to submit / upload a document, including uploading a document in the incorrect format where the student believed they had done so; (typically the student would be able to spontaneously rectify by production of a correct version)

## **4 Consideration of Cases and Use of Discretion**

In all EC requests, an expectation of integrity, consideration of likelihood, and acknowledgement that human error can occur, should be applied when considering an appropriate outcome. Institutions should therefore take into consideration the following factors and considerations when reaching an outcome:

- a) **Experience** of the student and their history of submission and use of ECs - is the situation atypical, or novel for the student? For example, where a situation is unfamiliar we might accept human error, however where a student has been in a similar situation previously we may reasonably expect them to avoid a repeat of such accidental/ avoidable errors.
- b) **Foreseeability** of the incident/ difficulty - is the situation unanticipated/ and/or could the student have prevented or expected it? Foreseeability does not automatically mean that it is within the student's control and vice versa. For example, losing an assessment file with no back up is not foreseeable (I didn't know it was going to happen) but it may be argued might have been anticipated and the impact mitigated by having a backup, whereas the death of a terminally ill family member can be foreseen, but is outside of the student's control, and has an impact which cannot be mitigated for.
- c) **Expectations/ reasonableness of requiring evidence** - is it likely that the student can readily obtain evidence to corroborate their request? Where the circumstances of the student preclude help-seeking behaviours and/or evidence is difficult to obtain then consideration and flexibility should be shown. Self-testimony / family accounts can be accepted as evidence in such cases. Where it is reasonable though, students should be expected to evidence their case.
- d) **Proportionality of impact** - if the request is rejected, would the outcome be unreasonably disproportionate to the offence? An ECP decision can have a variety of impacts upon the student depending on the particulars of the case. In some instances the effects on overall marks may be insignificant, for example, if the item is just one of a number of assessments in a non-counting year as opposed to where there is just a single piece of summative work in a final year semester and the impact significant. In some instances, a module fail may be compensated for and in others no compensation is available. In other words, the same decision can have different effects and, in some instances, it is not unreasonable to conclude that the outcome might be disproportionate to the "offence". Where this is the case discretion may be necessary in formulating a recommendation to the Board.

For example:

*Lee has spent the morning undertaking a final check of his assessment before submitting it by the 3pm deadline. He is at home and is ready to begin the upload of his assessment at 2.30pm. The upload is not working so he re-sets his Wi-Fi router – it seems that his internet, which is normally fine, is not working as it normally does and there appears to be intermittent signal issues. He continues trying to upload the work, to no avail. As the deadline approaches, he decides it is best to email his work to his module organise as the next best alternative.*

✓ It is agreed to accept the submission without penalty on the basis that (a) the student submitted the work on time albeit via the incorrect method of submission, (b) this is the first time that the student has submitted work via the incorrect method of submission, and (c) it is unreasonable to expect the student to have foreseen internet issues and to reject the request would be disproportionate to the "offence". If the student has reported similar internet issues previously then the request would unlikely have been approved on the basis that the student is aware that his internet connection is temperamental

For example:

*Liz is a second year undergraduate student and has submitted her latest assessment 5 minutes after the deadline. Liz has asked for the late penalty submission to be removed on the basis that her internet speed in University residences was slow and prevented the assessment uploading on time.*

× The ECP rejects the request on the basis that (a) the student's submission history shows that she had a similar request approved when she first began her studies and her submission history shows that she has subsequently had late submission penalties applied to multiple assessments, and (b) there is no record of University systems being slow on the date of submission. It seems that this is a case of poor academic practice for which the late submission penalty should stand and the student reminded of support at Student Services.

## **5 Extenuating Circumstances Requests and Supporting Evidence**

- 5.1 Students should report any extenuating circumstances (ECs) by submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Request (ECR). The request should include an indication of what consideration or adjustment the student is seeking (e.g. an extension to a Deadline submission date or a Delayed Assessment opportunity). If the ECR is not complete, the request will not be considered.
- 5.2 An ECR must be supported, wherever reasonably possible, by appropriate documentary evidence. This evidence must be relevant to the event or state of affairs claimed and to the appropriate time period. It is important that the evidence should, where reasonably possible, speak to the negative impact on the student's ability to work to the best of their capabilities and not just record that a certain set of circumstances occurred.
- 5.3 The evidence supporting the ECR ought to, wherever reasonably possible, be provided by independent, professional third-party sources; self-reporting or statements provided by family, friends and Academic Advisers are likely to count as "evidence" in limited situations as indicated above.
- 5.4 Due to professional and legal requirements relating to the protection of patient confidentiality, evidence from the institutions Talking Therapist Service (or similar services) may simply report that a student is either currently in or about to start a talking therapy without supplying details of the nature of the student's condition (although there is an expectation that relevant dates (including referral) will be reported to ensure that they correlate with the claimed ECs). This should be taken as appropriate supporting evidence of the student's claims.
- 5.5 Where a student believes that the relevant circumstances are of a highly confidential nature, they may report the circumstances to the relevant Partner Institution Student Support Service or equivalent. This Student Support Service (or equivalent) shall either:
  - a) Confirm the confidential nature of the circumstances and provide the Extenuating Circumstances Panel with a statement of their severity and the date(s) of their likely impact. The substantive detail of the circumstances shall remain confidential to the Partner Institution Student Service (or equivalent); OR

- b) Determine that the nature of the circumstances does not merit confidentiality of treatment and advise the student that they should report their ECs in the normal way.
- 5.6 In those exceptional cases where supporting evidence cannot be realistically provided, that which is supplied should be detailed enough that relevant institution role holders (e.g. Extenuating Circumstances Panels) are able to reasonably infer the ECs' likely detrimental effects.
- 5.7 The type and amount of supporting evidence should, wherever possible, be proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the adjustment being requested by the student, i.e., the greater the adjustment, the more comprehensive the evidence required.
- 5.8 Any submitted evidence written in a language other than English must be provided with a certified translation.
- 5.9 Evidence from a third-party must be signed and dated, preferably on headed paper or, alternatively an email from the third-party sent from their professional email account (if evidence is being sent in a professional capacity).
- 5.10 It is expected that the student will provide all relevant evidence at the time of their EC application or within 14 calendar days of its submission. Where there is good reason that the evidence cannot be supplied within 14 calendar days, the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel may grant further time. Since consideration of the ECR cannot take place until all documentation is supplied, care should be taken when granting such extensions in the light of §7.4.
- 5.11 The types of evidence which are likely to be supportive for various types of EC are outlined within Appendix 1
- 5.12 In the case of rejection of an ECR, the student should be advised that they may challenge the decision through the institution's Academic Appeals and Complaints Procedure although normally not on the basis of the originally submitted ECR and supporting documentation. If the ECR was rejected due to non-receipt or lack of third-party evidence, the student can submit a new ECR for consideration if additional evidence is subsequently attained.

For example:

*Ben has been feeling low for a while now. He had no motivation to go out with friends over the Christmas break or engage in his normal routine. He feels anxious about what might be wrong and doesn't know why he feels this way. He has missed lectures and two assessment deadlines from last semester and is now really worried about the impact on his studies. He finds the courage to speak to Student Services who provide assurances that they can support him and help him to get back on track with his studies. He is encouraged to make an appointment to see his GP who provides a doctor's note which explains that this is the first*

*time that he has sought medical advice and advocates support for retrospective extensions for the assessments due 2 months ago. Ben is concerned that his request may not be approved as he didn't seek support at the time that the assessments were due.*

✓ The ECP approves the request on the basis of (a) self-testimony from the student as it is acknowledged that mental health circumstances described can preclude help-seeking behaviour or disclosure, and (b) a GP note. Although the GP note confirms it is a new appointment, and doesn't confirm the nature and duration of any impact on the student, it does support the requested extensions for the retrospective disclosure of a mental health condition.

## **6 Mitigating Adjustments for Extenuating Circumstances**

6.1 When submitting an Extenuating Circumstances Request (ECR), the student is required to state what adjustments are being requested to mitigate the effects of the extenuating circumstances (ECs).

6.2 The permitted mitigating adjustments allowed are:

- a) An extension to the submission date or delayed assessment (including Reassessment) for those items of assessment classified as 'Deadline' (i.e. Coursework, Written Assignment, Dissertation, Project);
- b) A Deferred Event (including Reassessment) opportunity for those items of assessment classified as 'Event' (i.e. Examination, Course Test, Objective Structured Clinical Examination, Objective Structured Pharmacy Examination, Practical, Presentation).
- c) Request for special consideration by the Board of Examiners regarding decisions relating to progression and/or final classification;
- d) A repeat of a period of study or an interruption to studies.

6.3 When an Extension is granted, the submission time is no later than 3pm on the day of the new deadline.

6.4 When an Extension request takes the new submission date beyond the return of the marked assessment to the rest of the module cohort, students will continue working on the same first assessment task. Where a course team identify that this is not appropriate to the discipline or assessment item, then they should:

- a) state so in the assessment brief before the module begins; and
- b) notify affected students that a differentiated task will be set.

6.5 A Delayed Assessment (including Reassessment) may be considered for those event assessments where:

- a) the student reports, prior to the Event, that they are not fit to undertake, or are prevented from undertaking the assessment;
  - b) the student failed to attend the original Event;
  - c) the student attended the Event but believes that they did not have a fair attempt due to the effects of their ECs;
  - d) the delivery of the module hampered the ability of students to be assessed fairly.
- 6.6 Where the request for a Delayed Assessment (including Reassessment) rests on medical circumstances, the student must seek medical evidence on the day of the assessment, unless reasonably prevented from doing so.
- 6.7 A Delayed Assessment cancels the assessment that it replaces and the mark, if any, originally awarded. The recorded mark shall be the mark received for the Delayed Assessment and not the better of the 2 marks achieved. The mark for the Delayed Assessment/reassessment will be used to calculate progression and final classification.
- 6.8 In the case where a Delayed Assessment/reassessment is approved at a student's request, but the initial assessment has been attempted and passed, it will be assumed that the delayed attempt is no longer required and that the student will keep the mark unless they request otherwise. If a new attempt is requested then 6.7 applies.
- 6.9 Where a student had not requested a delayed assessment/reassessment but this is recommended by an ECP, a student may choose whether or not to attempt the delayed assessment/reassessment. If they elect not to take the delayed assessment/reassessment the original mark obtained will stand.
- 6.10 Once a Delayed Assessment has been taken, the student cannot void the attempt and request to record the original mark.
- 6.11 An approved Delayed Assessment (including Reassessment) will normally take place during the next assessment period.

## **7 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances Requests and Extenuating Circumstance Panels**

- 7.1 The decision to approve an Extenuating Circumstances Request (ECR), where required, will be determined by the institution's Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Approval depends upon:
- a) the ECR meeting the extenuating circumstances criteria outlined in §3.2 (and consistent with the types of examples in §3.3);

- b) the requested mitigating adjustment being permitted under §6.2; and
- c) the requested mitigating adjustment being reasonable.

7.2 Where an ECR clearly meets the criteria in §3.2 (and is consistent with the examples in §3.3) and the mitigating adjustment is permitted by §6.2 and is reasonable (i.e. a request where no discretion in the decision making is required), the Chair of the ECP may approve the ECR.

7.3 In the case that:

- a) the ECR does not clearly meet the criteria in §3.2; OR
- b) where the submitted evidence, if any, does not clearly support the application; OR
- c) where the requested mitigating adjustment appears unreasonable (i.e. a request for an extension for an assessment more than one month in the future, or where the extension requested seems excessive); OR
- d) the request is complex or borderline for approval;

approval will be determined by the institution's Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

7.4 In the case that:

- a) the ECR relates to human error as outlined in §3.5; OR
- b) the ECR relates to technical problems related to a failure of systems as outlined in §3.3 (k); OR
- c) the ECR has been submitted after the agreed deadline; OR
- d) the ECR has been provisionally approved by the ECP subject to receipt of a specified type of evidence; OR
- e) the requested type of evidence is not received; OR
- f) the evidence is not received by the agreed deadline;

approval will be determined by the institution's Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

7.5 Each institution shall have an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) appointed by the Principal (or equivalent) which will consist of a pool of no less than 4 members of academic staff to draw upon (one of whom will act as Chair)

7.6 The Chair of the ECP shall be a member of a/the Board of Examiners.

- 7.7 Chairs of Boards of Examiners are not permitted to act as ECP Chairs but may be members of the ECP.
- 7.8 A minimum of 2 members of the ECP pool are required to engage in the consideration of cases, with the exception of the Pre-Board ECP meeting (cf. §§7.9-7.17) where at least 3 members must be in attendance.
- 7.9 The consideration of ECRs by an ECP need not involve a physical meeting of members if alternative methods of discussion and mutual deliberation are available.
- 7.10 ECPs shall normally reach their decision and the student will be advised of the outcome within 3 working days of the ECR being received. In some instances it may be necessary to extend this deadline.
- 7.11 Before any meeting of the Board of Examiners where decisions about progression or classification are taken, there shall be a Pre-Board ECP meeting.
- 7.12 The Pre-Board ECP shall receive all ECRs and associated adjustments along with the record of all student marks to be considered by the Board of Examiners.
- 7.13 Where ECRs have already been considered and Extension and Delayed Assessment adjustments have been made, the ECP shall consider whether any additional adjustments may be appropriate.
- 7.14 Students may submit ECRs for ECs not previously reported no later than 14 calendar days prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board ECP. The only mitigating adjustment associated with late ECRs of this sort will be a request for special consideration by the Board of Examiners regarding decisions relating to progression and/or final classification (§6.2(c)). ECRs reported later than 14 calendar days prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board ECP will be regarded as a late submission, therefore the ECR will be subject to the conditions in §5.10.
- 7.15 The date of Pre-Board ECP meetings will be publicised to students. A deadline date for the submission of extenuating circumstances to Pre-Board ECPs will be published to students.
- 7.16 The Pre-Board ECP shall determine the severity of impact of each student's ECs and make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners on how the impact of the ECs should be accommodated where appropriate. Recommendations may include:
- a) Award of a higher degree classification;
  - b) Where progression requirements have not been met, recommend to retake the year or a part of the year, with or without an interruption in a period of study or assessment, Reassessment or further Reassessment;
  - c) For students in Stages 0, 1 or 2, provisional progression pending the successful outcome of the Delayed Assessment or Reassessment. This adjustment is available

only where a student has failed a single module and has approval for a further attempt in the failed item(s). Assessment must be completed by the deadline set annually;

- d) That the student be transferred to an alternative course;
- e) A further attempt (delayed assessment or reassessment) for an assessment classified as deadline or event.

7.17 The Board of Examiners will normally follow the recommendations of the Pre-Board ECP. If not, the minutes should record the justification for the rejection noting that any alternative arrangement shall only be approved by the Board if it is in the student's best interests. The record should preserve the confidentiality of the case (cf. §2.1(i)).

7.18 When making decisions regarding appropriate adjustments, the Board of Examiners shall demonstrate (and have recorded) that it has fully considered the recommendations of the Pre-Board ECP.

7.19 Any adjustments must comply with any applicable Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies' (PSRBs) requirements (e.g. maximum length of registration).

## 8 APPENDIX 1 – Examples of Evidence

Extenuating Circumstance	Examples of the type of evidence that are likely to support an EC request – not exhaustive
Bereavement	<p>An extension request of up to 14 calendar days submitted with a self-testimony for a Deadline assessment will be approved. A request beyond 14 days requires evidence such as:</p> <p>Supporting statement from family member/Academic Adviser;            An obituary; order of service; death certificate; legal or medical letters; letter from undertaker may be provided if readily available.</p> <p>The EC application must also state the student's relationship to the deceased. It is unlikely that further professional evidence detailing the effects on the student will be required.</p>
A serious short-term illness or accident	<p>Letter from a health professional such as a GP, psychiatrist or mental health counsellor confirming the diagnosis and stating an opinion as to the nature and duration of any impact on the student; medical certificate; prescription; hospital admissions record; Do not submit photographs of injuries or illness.</p> <p>Since evidence such as a prescription or admissions record, does not necessarily specify the negative affect on the student's ability to complete their assessment(s), where possible and relevant, evidence from a suitable health professional detailing these effects should also be submitted.</p> <p>A copy of medical history / notes and/or any evidence that only records the student's self-reporting of the health problems will normally be deemed insufficient for requests not covered by self-certification (except for the cases of bereavement and respiratory illness).</p>
Unforeseen recent illness of dependents or close family members	<p>Supporting statement from family member/Academic Adviser;            Medical certificate or GP's letter relating to the dependent/family member confirming the recent sudden or severe nature of the illness. The impact on the student will be inferred/accepted for requests for short-term requests of up to a month. If longer adjustments are requested, then independent professional third-party evidence should be submitted which confirms the impact on the student.</p>
A long-term health physical or mental health condition worsening or a mental health crisis	<p>Medical certificate, GP's letter, statement from a registered mental health practitioner or a member of the institution's Student Support Services reporting the specific deterioration or sudden change and the time period it applies to. The evidence should refer to how the change in conditions has impacted on the student. This may be provided in advance of a student's examinations and could apply to all of them in any examination period.</p> <p>Evidence simply confirming the long-term condition without mentioning the recent deterioration will be normally deemed insufficient.</p> <p>Self-testimony for retrospective disclosures of mental health conditions will be accepted for short-term requests of up to one</p>

	month on the basis that these conditions can preclude help-seeking behaviour or disclosure. If longer adjustments are requested, then independent professional third-party evidence (as listed above) should be submitted which confirm that support is being sought. Due to the late disclosure of the condition, 'retrospective' third party evidence or evidence confirming that 'student tells me' should be accepted in the first instance.
Covid or other respiratory illness	An extension request of up to 7 calendar days submitted with a self-testimony for a Deadline assessment will be approved. A request beyond 7 calendar days requires medical evidence.
Long-term health condition where reasonable adjustments are not yet in place	Letter or e-mail from the institution's Student Support Services (or equivalent) confirming that the delay in support was beyond the student's control.
Victim of a serious crime	Supporting statement from family member/Academic Adviser/ Student Services; Police crime number, legal letters, crime report from the police or other investigating authority; an insurance claim.  Since such evidence does not refer to the impact of the event on the student, further evidence may also be required for ECs claimed to have affected the student <i>for more than a month</i> .  Claims relating to injuries or trauma suffered as a result of a motor traffic accident would normally be considered as a medical circumstance and require suitable medical evidence as outlined above.
Legal proceedings requiring court attendance	Letter from a solicitor/legal officer or official court communication.
Representative participation in a national or international cultural or sports event	Formal notification from the relevant official body or bodies involved. Although independent professional third party evidence outlining the impact on the student's preparation and completion of the assessment may be supplied, it is likely that impact on the student may be reasonably inferred.
Exceptional and unforeseeable transport difficulties	Evidence of a major transportation incident from a relevant and appropriate source (including media reports). Evidence will also need to demonstrate that the student was both affected and that there was no reasonable means of foreseeing or overcoming the difficulties.
Significant adverse recent personal/family circumstances	Independent professional third-party evidence describing the circumstances, the time period affected and the impact on the student. Where this is not possible, sufficient detail should be submitted so that the likely effects can be reasonably inferred.
Reasonable adjustments requesting that extensions are	Reasonable adjustments requesting that extensions are considered sympathetically must be supported by additional

<p>considered sympathetically (Reasonable Adjustment (RA) '7 calendar day extension via Extenuating Circumstances process)</p>	<p>evidence from Student Support Services if an extension for more than 7 calendar days is requested.</p>
<p>Technical Circumstances – failure attributable to the institution's systems at the point of submission of coursework or during an event assessment such as an examination or course test</p>	<p>Screen shot of the submission in progress, a screen shot of a formal message published by the institution's IT Services website advising of a systems failure or an email from IT Services responding to the problems encountered.</p>
<p>Technical Circumstances - Outage from your internet service provider</p>	<p>Outage from your internet service provider</p>
<p>Employment</p>	<p>Work rota;</p> <p>Correspondence (including e-mails) from Support Services or staff: Adviser, Module organiser, Course director, Workplace tutor (for courses that include employment-based work or placements);</p> <p>Requests for deferred events will not normally be considered based on reasons relating to paid employment as event dates are known in advance and can be planned for.</p>

## 9 APPENDIX 2 – Further Guidance – Illustrative Case Examples

*Rachel has just begun her postgraduate degree after a number of years away from Higher Education. She was pleased to have successfully used Blackboard to submit her first assessment but is later informed by the institution that she has submitted it incorrectly to the submission point in Blackboard. By the time this is discovered, even if she submitted the intended assessment, penalisation for late submission would result in a zero mark.*

- The student is unable to provide evidence that the work was last modified before the original deadline date but the ECP Chair agrees to accept the late submission of the correct assessment without penalty on the basis that (a) the student was able to submit the correct work as soon as she was aware of the mistake, (b) the student is new to the institution and this is the first submission using Blackboard, and (c) the student would receive a zero mark for her first assessment, which contributes 70% weighting to the module average and to the overall award mark. It is most likely that the student made a mistake and to reject the request would be disproportionate to the "offence".

*Ben is a second year undergraduate student and is used to submitting assessments via Blackboard, however he has been informed by the institution that he has submitted his most recent assessment to the 'Formative' submission point for the module instead of the 'summative submission point'. Ben is concerned to now receive a penalty for late submission even though he submitted on time and doesn't think the Blackboard submission points were very clear.*

- Even though the student is in his second year of study and is an experienced user of Blackboard for submission of assessments, the ECP agrees to accept the submission without penalty on the basis that (a) the student submitted the correct assessment on time albeit to the incorrect submission point but for the correct module (b) there are a number of Blackboard submission points for the module and these could be labelled more clearly (c) the student has submitted all previous assessments on time and to the correct place, except for one for which he has received a late penalty deduction but for which he has not submitted an EC in relation to. The student made a mistake and to reject the request would be disproportionate to the "offence".

*Angela is a final year undergraduate student and has submitted her dissertation online and before the deadline but realises shortly after submission that the document submitted has been corrupted. It seems that the document became corrupted when exported to PDF format. Angela seeks help from IT Service Desk to resolve the problem and requests to upload the non-corrupted version the next day.*

- The ECP Chair agrees to accept the submission without penalty on the basis that (a) the student submitted the correct assessment on time although the version uploaded was corrupted (b) it would be unreasonable to expect the student to foresee or plan for the possibility of corruption when converting the file to PDF and (c) the assessment is a key element of the course with a credit weighting of 60 so any penalty applied would

have a significant impact for the overall module and award mark. To reject the request would be disproportionate to the "offence".

**These regulations apply to UEA validated Awards at the following institutions:**

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts  
South Essex College  
West Suffolk College