

# Academic Regulations - Extenuating Circumstances

**Approved by:** *Academic Committee*  
**Approval date** *06/07/2022*

## Extenuating Circumstances

### 1. Principles and Definitions

- 1.1 The University acknowledges that some external or significant events can have an adverse effect on a student's ability to study and engage with their assessments. The University is committed to maintaining a fair, consistent, and objective procedure for matters relating to extenuating circumstances. The below will explain what a student should do if they are experiencing these circumstances and how their requests will be progressed.
- 1.2 'Extenuating Circumstances' means unforeseen and unpreventable circumstances that are beyond a student's control and have, or have the potential to, significantly impair their academic performance.
- 1.3 'Deferral' means a student's assessment attempt is transferred to the next available date. Normally a deferral may be agreed only before the start of the assessment period or sitting.
- 1.4 'Extensions' means a student's prescribed time to sit an assessment is lengthened. Normally, an extension may be agreed only after the assessment sitting begins and before the assessment attempt is submitted. Normally extensions cannot be applied to examinations and presentations.
- 1.5 Extenuating circumstances must be evidenced and demonstrate as to why the student's ability to study and engage with the assessments has been adversely affected.
- 1.6 Extenuating circumstances are intended to cover circumstances that are transient and do not stop the student continuing with the course. A student who is affected by serious ongoing circumstances (medical, personal or financial) that seem unlikely to be resolved within a reasonable time may be advised or required to:
  - Take a break in study; or
  - Get and maintain an active Student Support Arrangement with the Student Support & Welfare team.
- 1.7 Where possible, all applications for extenuating circumstances must contain independent, relevant and authoritative evidence, and be signed by an independent third party.
- 1.8 The University may investigate evidence and has the right to call for independent or expert advice and to make other such enquiries as it sees fit.
- 1.9 If a student has passed (including provisionally) the component, an application for extenuating circumstances cannot be applied or progressed.

### 2. Reasons for Extenuating Circumstances

- 2.1 These are examples (and not meant to form a complete list) of reasons commonly accepted:
  - Serious short-term illness or accident of a nature that, in an employment context, would lead to absence on sick leave.
  - Bereavement- death of a close relative or significant other.
  - Evidence of a short-term exacerbation of a long-term health condition.

- Other exceptional factors for which there is evidence of the impact.

2.2 These are examples (and not meant to form a complete list) of reasons commonly declined:

- Statement of a medical condition without reasonable evidence (medical or otherwise) to support it or a condition supported by retrospective medical evidence.
- Medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period or learning point of which the request is being applied for.
- Minor illness or ailment, which in an employment context would be unlikely to lead to an absence from work.
- Long-term health conditions for which the student is already receiving reasonable or appropriate adjustments.
- Personal IT issues.

### 3. Declaring Fit to Sit

- 3.1 When a student submits an assessment or attends an in-person assessment, they deem and declare themselves fit to do so.
- 3.2 A student who has made such a declaration may not apply for an extension or deferral unless they provide independent evidence to state that they were unable to declare themselves fit to sit.
- 3.3 A student who does not consider themselves fit to sit a summative assessment because of the unforeseen circumstances should use this regulation.

### 4. Submitting the Application

- 4.1 It will be the responsibility of the student to submit the application, alongside the necessary supporting evidence, within the below time periods:
- **Deferral:** the student must submit the application no later than 5 working days before the assessment submission deadline date.
  - **Extension:** the student should submit the application no later than 2 working days before the submission deadline date.
- 4.2 A late request made after the submission deadline date will not normally be considered. However, the Head of Registry, (or nominated representative) retains the right to consider a request at their discretion where they deem there to be a credible explanation as to why the application was not made within the required timescales.
- 4.3 The application must include:
- A clear statement of the basis or grounds for the request; and
  - All relevant evidence or details of the events in support of the request that the student wishes to be considered.
- 4.4 If the student requires more time to collect supporting evidence, they must submit the form on time and liaise with the Registry team to establish and confirm an appropriate deadline to submit the evidence required for the application.

- 4.5 Applications are treated confidentiality and seen only by members of staff required to decide the outcome. If a student wishes to restrict sight of their application, they may password protect their full application and email the documents to [extenuatingcircumstances@regents.ac.uk](mailto:extenuatingcircumstances@regents.ac.uk), indicating that they wish the document to be viewed only by the Head or Deputy Head of Registry.
- 4.6 Where possible, all applications must contain independent, relevant and authoritative evidence and signed by an appropriate third party. The University reserves the right to take evidence and make enquiries as it sees fit on the submitted evidence.
- 4.7 In considering the applications the University aims to evaluate the effect of the circumstances on the student's study and to decide how they should treat this to ensure any actions assist the student but do not give them an unfair advantage.
- 4.8 The below are considerations of the applications:
- Significant: the event or circumstances must have had a demonstratable impact on the student's studies.
  - Unexpected: the student must normally have had no prior knowledge that a particular event or circumstance would occur.
  - Unpreventable: there must have been no reasonable steps that the student could have taken to prevent the event or circumstances from occurring.
  - Appropriate: the student must be able to demonstrate how this event or circumstances impacted their ability to complete the assessment.
  - Corroborated: supported by independent documentary evidence.

## **5. Determining Extenuating Circumstances Applications**

- 5.1 When an extenuating circumstances application is received there will be an initial assessment on whether the application meets the relevant grounds and basis as set out by these regulations.
- 5.2 If it is determined that there are no grounds or basis the application will be declined, and the student will be informed in no later than 3 working days of the decision.
- 5.3 Where it is determined that there are grounds, the application will be determined by two officers of the Registry team, who are members of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. If they are in agreement with the decision the student will be notified of the outcome. All other claims will be reviewed by the full Extenuating Circumstances Panel, which will be Chaired by the Deputy Head of Registry and comprises 3 members of staff.
- 5.4 The remit of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel is to:
- Review reported circumstances for which due written evidence has been provided to reach a judgement if the relevant grounds and considerations have been met;
  - Determine whether the circumstances cited are acceptable grounds to grant an application;
  - Ensure decisions are equitable and consistent across cohorts and courses;
  - Note the time period of the Subject and Finalist and Progression Boards.
- 5.5 The below outcomes may be applied:

- To grant the application for extension. If an extension is granted it will normally be for a period of 7-14 calendar days (including weekends and bank holidays) and this will normally commence from the day of the submission deadline.
- To grant the application for deferral.
- Decline the application.

5.6 The Extenuating Circumstance Panel may accept an application and apply a deferral, even when the student requested an extension, this will normally take place when the Subject Board is due to meet.

5.7 The student will receive the outcome in writing within 3 working days of the receipt of the application.

## **6. Appeal**

6.1 The outcome of the requests will be reported to the next relevant Subject Board. The student may lodge an appeal application, within 10 working days of receiving the decision in writing of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel, if they satisfy and meet the grounds as set out by the University's Academic Appeal regulations.