

**APPENDIX C**

**PROCEDURES & GUIDANCE  
FOR STUDENT CLAIMS OF  
EXTENUATING  
CIRCUMSTANCES**

## Regulations governing student claims of extenuating circumstances affecting formal assessment/examination with effect from 1 September 2005, revised September 2015

- i. Statement of University Principles
- ii. Definition and nature of extenuating circumstances
- iii. Evidence in support of claims of extenuating circumstances
- iv. Procedures for dealing with claims of extenuating circumstances

### 1. STATEMENT OF UNIVERSITY PRINCIPLES

This statement replaces all earlier statements of policy and procedure on extenuating circumstances.

- 1.1 The fundamental principle underlying the work of the University of Greenwich is that the Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards conferred by the University should be consistent and comparable in standard with awards granted and conferred throughout higher education in the United Kingdom. The University has a duty to maintain the standard of its awards, so that employers, professional bodies, other educational institutions and outside agencies can have confidence in the level of achievement that those awards represent.
- 1.2 At the same time the University has a duty to each individual student to ensure that assessments are conducted fairly, and that each student has the opportunity to demonstrate her/his true level of academic performance.
- 1.3 Recognising that students may sometimes suffer serious illness or other problems which are outside their control and which may prevent them from showing their real level of performance, the University has a system whereby students who have been affected by such problems can put forward extenuating claims for consideration.
- 1.4 **It is important that students understand what kinds of circumstances could be treated as extenuating circumstances, and that problems arising from their own negligence or inability to organise their time, will not be considered.**
- 1.5 Most students experience a certain amount of stress at periods of formal assessment. It is expected that individuals studying in higher education will develop the ability to deal with this and to produce satisfactory work whilst meeting deadlines. "Examination stress" or stress in a practice placement, shall not in and of itself be considered as an extenuating circumstance.
- 1.6 Students should also know that even if their extenuating circumstances are deemed acceptable and relevant to the assessment they have failed, or not submitted, **this may not excuse them from completing formal assessment** if requested by the Progression and Award Board. They may still have to undertake assessment to demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes in order to pass that stage of their programme or qualify for the final award at a point in time when the extenuating circumstances no longer affect the student's performance. Nor will an extenuating circumstances claim necessarily affect the academic judgement of Progression and Award Boards.
- 1.7 Claims for extenuating circumstances should be made at the time of the unforeseen circumstances and **not retrospectively**.
- 1.8 Coursework submitted up to ten working days after the official submission deadline set by the Course Leader will be accepted and marked and, if it meets the criteria for a 'pass', the mark will

be capped at 40% (50% for postgraduate programmes). Where coursework is submitted up to ten working days of the set deadline and an Extenuation Panel has accepted as valid the reason for the late submission no capping will be imposed on the coursework mark (see Section 5: Extenuation Panel). Coursework will not be marked if received later than ten working days after the set deadline for submission and, in such circumstances, a non-submission will be recorded against this item of assessment.

1.9 Timing of claims:

- a) Claims relating to impaired performance of coursework may be made **up to 4 weeks before the assessment is due or at the time of the assessment being due**, but not retrospectively. This includes work affected by extenuation which is handed in by submission deadlines AND also work submitted within 10 working days of the submission deadline.
- b) Claims relating to circumstances resulting in a need for up to 10 extra working days to submit should be made at the **time the assessment is due** and not retrospectively.
- c) Claims relating to the non-attendance of examinations must be made within 5 working days from the date of the missed examination.

1.10 It is possible, and encouraged, that students should opt to submit or participate in assessment by the original date, even if extenuation has been approved. However, in all cases the grade awarded will be entered into the student's transcript. Where the assessment has been passed but the grades reflect "below expectation" levels of performance because of the extenuation, a further opportunity to undertake a 'deferral in stage' or 'deferred repeat' to improve upon impaired performance may be given at the discretion of the Progression and Award Board.

1.11 Claims relating to multiple assessments/examinations affected, which can be covered by the same extenuating circumstance should be detailed on a single claim form. Or, where appropriate to ensure the student makes timely applications, multiple forms may be submitted.

## 2. DEFINITION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

2.1 Extenuating circumstances are normally defined as circumstances which are unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond a student's control, and which may have affected his/her performance.

2.2 A student might wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed materially or significantly to poor performance in any formally assessed work, absence from examination or other assessment event, or failure in examination or other assessed work. Prior consultation with the Programme Leader or Personal tutor is advisable. A student might wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed to a failure to submit work within published deadlines.

2.3 It is the responsibility of any students with a **long-term condition or problem** which may affect her/his study and assessment, to seek advice as early as possible and use the support services available through the University<sup>5\*</sup>, to ensure that they can study and undergo formal assessment in the way which meets their special needs but still allows them to demonstrate their real academic ability. (See Examination & Assessment Regulations for Students with Disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties and Long-Term Medical Conditions, April 2012). Advice and help are

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<sup>5</sup> University students studying at Partner organisations should use the support services available in situ.

readily available through the Students' Union and Student Centre. Prior consultation with the Programme Leader or Personal Tutor is also advisable.

- 2.4 When submitting claims for extenuation a student will need to demonstrate that the circumstances claimed had affected her/him **at the time** of a formal assessment or in **the period immediately leading up** to an assessment. A long term condition or problem will not be treated as extenuating circumstances, unless it can be shown that the condition or problem was exacerbated by circumstances occurring during or close to the assessment period.
- 2.5 Valid extenuating circumstances would normally fall into the categories:
- a) Illness or serious accident at the time of an assessment or in the period leading up to a formal assessment;
  - b) Severe emotional or mental stress at the time of an assessment or immediately before an assessment, for example through bereavement, social, matrimonial or family problems, experience of assault, robbery or other traumatic event, eviction/homelessness in unavoidable circumstances, unavoidable involvement in legal proceedings;
  - c) Other factors totally outside the student's control; e.g. for part time students, unforeseen and essential work commitments; for students undertaking practice-based assignments, unforeseen decisions taken by the company or practice which prevent them from completing their assignment; (in both these circumstances a letter from the employer **must** be supplied). IT problems which are the responsibility of the University such as total system failure over a prolonged period.
- 2.6 It is expected that students will take reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable problems, such as loss of computer records (by backing up work regularly) or transport disruption (by planning alternative routes where possible).

### 3. EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF CLAIMS OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

- 3.1 Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the University's pro forma and must be supported by relevant objective evidence. Evidence must be in the form of an original document (not a photocopy) written and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstances with dates and if possible stating how the student's assessment has been affected. The third party should be a person who knows the student in a professional capacity and can give a first-hand account of the circumstances. Letters from family members are not normally acceptable, nor from fellow students (unless such corroboration is the only relevant evidence). **Submissions of extenuating circumstances will not be valid without independent evidence. Extenuation Panels will deem such claims to be invalid or request evidence before further consideration.**
- 3.2 It is recognised that the submission of such evidence may be related to sensitive and distressing circumstances. Students seeking guidance can do so through Student Centre or through the Students' Union Advice Service – [www.suug.co.uk/welfare](http://www.suug.co.uk/welfare) (Students in Partner organisations should seek guidance through their own Student Centre or counselling departments) and will be given as much assistance as possible. **Confidentiality will be preserved.** If the particular circumstances are so severe that the student would not want the information to be seen by anyone, then the Counsellor can write to the Chair of the Extenuation Panel(s) direct on behalf of the student outlining the circumstances and their findings following consultation over a period of time. The Counsellor will need to see any documentary evidence supplied by the student in order to be able to confirm that the facts have been verified.

3.3 Acceptable evidence to be submitted with an extenuation claim would include:

- A medical certificate issued **at the time of the illness**, specifying the nature of the illness and the dates affected. To be accepted, the medical certificate must be specific and confirm that this is the doctor's own diagnosis. It is not sufficient for the doctor to write a letter stating that the student saw her/him and claimed to be suffering from stress etc.;
- a letter from an independent counsellor or psychiatrist;
- a letter from the Student Services Counselling Service or the Students' Union Advice Service;
- a written statement from the student's personal tutor;
- a solicitor's letter indicating the nature and dates of legal proceedings; summons to attend court; report from a police officer;
- letter from a transport official confirming serious and unforeseen disruption to transport;
- Death certificate (e.g. of a close relative).

3.4 **Claims of extenuating circumstances without independent evidence will not be considered unless the circumstances are exceptional.**

## 4. PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

4.1 Procedures, including the role of an invigilator, to be followed if a student falls ill during an examination are detailed in the Regulations Governing the Conduct of Examinations:  
<http://www2.gre.ac.uk/current-students/regs/?a=577225>

4.2 Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the University's extenuating circumstances claim form, with independent evidence as described above. Copies can be obtained from the Faculties or partners, Student Centres and the Students' Union. Submission methods (often electronic) shall be as stipulated by the Faculty, or submission can be made directly to the Student Centres (in such cases, for receipt purposes the student number and programme, and date of submission should be recorded on an envelope **and marked 'extenuating circumstances'**).

4.3 Claims may also be sent by Recorded Delivery to the appropriate **Student Centre or Faculty/Departmental Reception**. Where claims are submitted by Recorded Delivery a stamped self-addressed envelope must be provided so that a receipt can be issued. No complaint relating to extenuating circumstances can be considered unless the claim has been receipted.

4.4 For students studying University awards at Partner organisations, extenuating circumstances forms are available from their Programme Leader. **The Programme Leader will ensure that completed documentation is returned to the appropriate University Student Centre or Faculty. Partner organisation students will be advised of the correct procedure by the Programme Leader.**

## 5. EXTENUATION PANELS

5.1 The records of the Extenuation Panel will be taken into consideration by the Progression and Award Board when reaching a decision for individual candidates.

## EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES CLAIM FORM

### 1. Your details.

All sections of this form must be completed in full. Please type or print clearly

Your Banner ID (A nine digit number)	
Your Full Name	
Contact Details (Note: we will normally use your University Email)	
Your Programme of Study	
Your Faculty or Department/ or the Partner at which you study	
Level or Year/Stage of Study	Mode: FT/PT/DL/Other

### 2. Summary of the circumstances

a) Please tick the box(es) that most accurately summarise your circumstances:

Medical (new)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical (ongoing: worsened)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work (part-time and placement students only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bereavement	<input type="checkbox"/>	Accident	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unexpected personal or family difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassment or Assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	Organisational maladministration	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Jury Service	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other situation (explain in the box alongside →)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

b) Please indicate the duration of the circumstances:

From:  To:

### 3. Documentary evidence:

Please tick the box(es) to show what form of evidence you have submitted with this form. Claims submitted without evidence will NOT be considered by Extenuation Panels

Doctor's certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hospital Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employer Letter (PT & placement students only)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	Death Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Court Papers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Counsellor's Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter from a Public Sector Agency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer's Letter	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jury Summons	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other situation (explain in the box alongside →)	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### 4. University staff informed (with whom you have discussed your circumstances)

Name	Role (i.e. job title)

**5. Formal Assessments Affected**

Please give the details of the item of assessment this claim is for (see example below for guidance):

Course Code eg <b>INDU 1106</b>	Course Title eg <b>Management Skills 1</b>	Assessment CRN (if known) eg 25827	Type or Title of Assessment eg Case Study	Due Date or Assessment Date of Item	Have you already submitted or been assessed for this item? (say "Yes" or "No")	You must select either a) or b) below:	
						a) An extra 10 working days after a deadline to submit (coursework only) (say "Yes" or "No" or N/A if not coursework)	b) An acknowledgement of missed or impaired performance (Say "Yes" or "No")

For example – From a Banner transcript on the portal

CRN	Title	Credit	Level	Weight	Type
12714	Management Skills 1: Managing the Individual and Team	15	4	100	Master
25827	.....INDU 1106 Case Study			50	Assess
25826	.....INDU 1106 E-Journal Log			50	Assess

**6. Details of the extenuating circumstances**

Please briefly describe the situation and **how** this has adversely affected your assessment or performance (remember that the Panel is assessing whether the situation is i) evidenced, ii) unexpected and unavoidable, iii) there was an impact upon your performance and iv) the negative impact was unable to be controlled). [If you are typing the box will expand – if you are handwriting these comments please include an extra sheet as needed.]

## 7. University Data Protection Policy

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires the University to observe legal provisions designed to safeguard both data subjects' rights (students' rights) and the data relating to them. The Act requires that we inform you of what personal data is acquired and the purposes for which it is acquired. By signing this form you will be giving the University permission to collect, hold and process additional personal data relating to you for evaluation of your extenuating circumstances.

Signing this declaration does not compromise any rights you enjoy under the Data Protection Act 1998 nor any other legislation relating to personal privacy and data storage. Should the University need to collect and process additional sensitive data your explicit consent will be sought. Further information can be obtained from the University's Data Protection Policy statement and the Data Protection Code of Practice.

### Declaration to be signed by student

I have read and understood the statement and agree to the University collecting, holding and processing my personal data for the purposes described. I declare that the information given in this extenuating circumstances form and the accompanying papers is accurate and that I would be willing, if required, to answer further questions related to it.

Signed or affirmed

Date:

.....  
.....

## 8. How to submit this form

*Please check your student handbook or programme website, or with your Faculty/departmental reception, for details of where and how to submit your claim.*

*Most forms are to be submitted electronically, or handed in to your Faculty reception or submitted to a campus Student Centre. Or if you wish to post the form you must use the recorded delivery service.*

## STUDENT GUIDANCE

### WHAT IS EXTENUATION?

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which

- impair your performance in assessment or reassessment, or
- prevent you from attending for assessment or reassessment, or
- prevent you from submitting assessed or reassessed work by the scheduled date

Such circumstances **rarely occur** and would normally be

- **unforeseeable** - in that you could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned, and
- **unpreventable** - in that you could do nothing reasonably in your power to prevent such an event, and
- expected to have a **serious impact** on performance

**Students are expected to make reasonable plans to take into account circumstances even those which, on occasion, may have been unforeseeable and unpreventable.**

For example, students commonly taking a route to the campus which experiences severe traffic delays would be expected to leave earlier or plan to take an alternative route on the morning of an examination. Another example would be a carer for a dependent who on occasion has not attended college because the dependent developed a minor illness. The student would have been expected to make contingency plans for alternative care just in case this happened on the day of an examination. The onus is on students to manage their life so that these types of occurrences can be handled if they arise.

#### ***What is meant by a serious impact on performance?***

Many things may have an impact on performance – a poor night's sleep, a minor illness (such as a cough or cold), a minor injury, financial worries etc. These will often impact on performance but would **not be expected to have a serious impact** and so would **not** be acceptable as extenuating circumstances.

### WHAT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE EXTENUATION?

- *Minor illnesses - even if covered by medical certificates.* As stated above these may have some impact but not a serious impact and so would not be regarded as extenuating circumstances.
- *Computer failure of your equipment or storage media.* Students are expected to take proper precautions and make back up copies of data which are accessible (not in a friend's house which becomes inaccessible). There are always other computers to work on.
- *Inadequate planning, organisation or time management.*
- *Computer failure of University equipment or storage media (where failure is less than a continuous 24 hours).* Network failures do happen and work should be planned to be finished before 'the last minute'. For instance students relying on finishing work within 24 hours of a deadline (e.g. printing your work off) are opening yourself up to this risk. This could have prevented this by better planning.
- *Transport problems.* Students need to plan for this possibility.
- *Moving house.* This is predictable.
- *Holidays.* This is predictable.

- *Wedding preparations.*
- *Sporting commitments* – exceptions might be made if a student was representing their country/University.
- *Misreading of assessment timetables.*
- *Family, work, social, financial or other general problems.* This is a large list but covers the sorts of things normally dealt with in everyday life and would not be regarded as extenuating circumstances.
- *Employment commitments* limiting time available for study (*although greater flexibility may be applicable to part-time students in full-time employment*)
- *Pressure of other academic work* e.g. other coursework due around the same time

**N.B. These examples are not definitive, and are intended only as a guide.**