



# **Pearson HE Extenuating Circumstances Policy**

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Document owner: **HE Quality & Standards**

Date approved: **July 2018**

Latest revision: **August 2022**

To be reviewed: **August 2023**

Approval Committee: **Higher Education Committee**

## **An Introduction**

Extenuating circumstances (EC) are circumstances beyond students' control which cause them to perform less well in the assessments than they might have expected. In general, extenuating circumstances will be of a medical or personal nature that affect them for any significant period of time and/or during the assessment period.

It is important to realise that only the most serious extenuating circumstances will have any significant impact on overall performance. Therefore, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action unless it believes that the extenuating circumstances have had a material effect on academic performance.

The Assessment Board can only make judgements about the impact of extenuating circumstances in light of evidence of students' academic ability demonstrated in nonaffected work. Boards cannot make judgements about the potential to have gained a higher grade if there is no evidence in the rest of their performance to support this. Furthermore, unless it appears that the extenuating circumstances have had a material effect on their results, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action. Students should therefore consider this carefully before submitting a form (see also how the Board assesses extenuating circumstances claims).

All students should submit their work by the agreed deadline or as soon as they can on return to College. ECs relating to late submissions will not be accepted without evidence that they have handed in their work.

There are three categories of EC claims which are provided (see Appendix 1 for information):

- A: acceptable reasons for claim with required evidence;
- B: reasons for claim that may be considered (with additional evidence);
- C: reasons that we would normally consider as unacceptable.

## **How do I inform the Assessment Board?**

It is students' responsibility to inform the Assessment Board about extenuating circumstances. Students can do this by completing an extenuating circumstances form which will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances panel who will then make recommendations to the Assessment Board regarding the effect their circumstances have had on performance (including non-submission of work).

Students may have previously discussed their difficulties with staff in their faculty; this does not in itself constitute the submission of extenuating circumstances. Students must formally submit an extenuating circumstances form for the Assessment Board to consider; informal notification will not be considered by the Board. Students need to complete an extenuating circumstances form which must be returned to the location stated above by the published deadline. We cannot guarantee that forms submitted after this date will be referred to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel or sent directly to the Assessment Board.

It is essential to inform the Board of any extenuating circumstances before it meets because you cannot subsequently appeal against any decision of the Assessment Board on the grounds of extenuating circumstances if you could reasonably have been expected to inform the Board in advance. It is also students' responsibility to explain fully the impact of extenuating circumstances on their work. If they do not sufficiently explain the impact, they cannot subsequently appeal and ask the Board to consider additional information.

Claims should be submitted as soon as possible after the circumstance(s) have occurred and before the assessment deadline or where applicable Assessment Board date. These deadlines are given on the programme assessment schedule.

All claims for extenuating circumstances must be anonymous and students must use their ID number.

Completed Extenuating Circumstances Forms must be sent to the Group Deputy Director: HE at New City College. Forms can be emailed to [Higher.Education@ncclondon.ac.uk](mailto:Higher.Education@ncclondon.ac.uk). These will be date stamped when received and a receipt will normally be sent to students' College email account within 10 working days of receipt.

### **What is an Extenuating Circumstances Panel?**

All decisions on action to be taken on claims for extenuating circumstances are the responsibility of the Assessment Board for the programme of study. Recommendations for action are made to the Assessment Board by an Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel membership normally comprises Group Deputy Director: HE, Group Curriculum Director and an Academic Staff member. All members must be independent of the programme of study of the claimant.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will consider extenuating circumstances relating to assessment performance, the non-submission of coursework and other extenuating circumstances affecting the academic year. The panel will make appropriate recommendations to the Assessment Board.

The Extenuating Circumstances Panel will normally meet monthly during the academic year. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel may request additional supporting evidence, where not provided fully, and will categorise the extenuating circumstances as follows:

- Extenuating circumstances which are sufficiently serious to make a decision to defer an assessment (Categories A and B);
- Extenuating circumstances which are not deemed sufficiently serious to make a deferral of assessment appropriate (Category C).

### **How much information do I need to include?**

Students should include on the form details of specific coursework, practicals or tests affected by the extenuating circumstances. Students must explain the impact these circumstances had on their performance. It is not the role of the Assessment Board to try to work this out or to seek further information on their behalf. Students are expected to make their submission clear and concise. Remember that the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and the Assessment Board are trying to determine whether the circumstances are likely to have significantly affected the student's academic performance.

### **What documentary evidence do I need to provide?**

**See guidance provided in appendix 1 on evidence required for extenuating circumstances claims.**

Students are required to submit documentary evidence to support claims of a medical or non-medical nature relating to absence from examinations/invigilated tests, or

related to an individual coursework assignment. It is students' responsibility to get this evidence as the College will not seek it on their behalf. A Medical Evidence Pro-forma is attached to the form for them to use if, having read the following guidelines and appendix, students believe that they need to supply medical evidence to support their claim.

### **Timed Assessment**

If the student misses a timed assessment or an invigilated test due to illness or are claiming to have been affected by medical problems during the assessment, they must seek medical attention on the day or as near to it as possible, and must submit documentary evidence. The evidence must relate specifically to the time of the illness and must make it clear that they were medically unfit to take the assessment.

### **Coursework**

Students are required to submit documentary evidence to support claims of a medical or non-medical nature. In many cases the Assessment Board may judge that a short-term or minor illness has not had a significant effect on their overall performance.

### **Serious or long-term illnesses affecting coursework**

If the student has been receiving treatment for a serious or long-term medical condition which they believe has seriously affected their work over a prolonged period, they must submit appropriate evidence. Students should be able to obtain evidence from their doctor using the Medical Evidence Pro-forma.

### **What circumstances are NOT taken into account?**

**See guidance provided in the appendix on unacceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances claims.**

It is not possible to list every circumstance that the Assessment Board would not accept or take into account. However, some of the more obvious examples are listed below:

- claims submitted after the deadline, unless there are good reasons why this is the case
- general pressure of work is not taken to be circumstances beyond their control, as students are expected to plan their work schedule
- a short-term problem or illness which has occurred during the year and which is not deemed to have had an overall effect on their performance
- personal disruptions or events which could have been anticipated; such as holidays, weddings, changing address or employment, religious holidays or festivals which are usually known in advance
- excessive demands on time or pressure of one's employment, which could have been anticipated
- financial constraints commonly experienced by students
- missing an examination practical because student misread the timetable or overslept

- having more than one examination/practical on the same day or on consecutive days (unless they were already suffering from illness or injury)
- where extenuating circumstances have affected the student throughout their time at College it is difficult to determine what their marks might have been like otherwise. In such cases, the Assessment Board is unlikely to take any action.

### **What is an Assessment Board?**

The Assessment Board will receive the recommendation from the Extenuating Circumstances Panel in respect of submitted extenuating circumstances. The Assessment Board will consider the decision(s) advised by the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and discuss appropriate action in respect of the students.

### **How are extenuating circumstances judged by an Assessment Board?**

The Assessment Board will try to determine whether, and to what extent, extenuating circumstances have affected a student's academic performance, and determine what action, if any, can be taken. In assessing the significance of extenuating circumstances, Boards will normally take into account:

- the severity of the problem and the length of time involved;
- any supporting documentary evidence;
- whether all work in the same period appears to have been equally affected;
- whether it is possible to gauge the effect of the extenuating circumstances upon academic performance;
- whether their achievement is consistent with past performance;
- the type of assessment affected, and how long they had to complete the work (i.e. date when work was set and deadline for submission).

Boards cannot estimate what their grade might have been.

### **What action can the Assessment Board take?**

The Assessment Board will try to ensure a fair result based on students' overall performance. It could take a number of actions as follows:-

The Board will either agree or discuss the recommendations of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel or discuss a particular case in detail as necessary at their meetings. Discussion will normally be brief and concentrated on those cases that require further careful consideration, usually because the extenuating circumstances may have adversely affected the student's final unit grade.

If the Assessment Board accepts the extenuating circumstance(s), the mitigation will normally be permission for the student to be assessed on the work in question as if for the first time. Such a student is deemed "Deferred".

The assessment is marked 'as if for the first time' (late submission penalties are not applied).

If the student fails the deferred assessment, any re-assessment will be in accordance with current College/Pearson regulations.

### **What action will not be taken by the Assessment Board?**

- a) Permit a student who presents extenuating circumstances to proceed to the next year of study if he or she has not met the necessary requirements;
- b) Permit students to fail a core unit or fail any published variations to the rules of assessment;
- c) Annotate statement of results/transcripts with comments about the existence of extenuating circumstances.

## **False Claims**

Please note that submitting a false claim or false documentation is a serious matter and would be regarded as an attempt to gain unfair advantage. This would be an academic offence and would be dealt with under the Academic Misconduct Procedures. The College reserves the right to check on the validity of the document(s) you submit by contacting the third party directly.

## **General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018**

By submitting an extenuating circumstances form students are agreeing to the College holding this personal data for the purposes of processing their claim. The College will hold this data in accordance with its notification under the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

## **Equality Act 2010**

If students find that they are unable to submit a hard copy of the Extenuating Circumstances Form, they can submit it electronically. Students should submit the form and evidence by the published deadline to [Higher.Education@ncclondon.ac.uk](mailto:Higher.Education@ncclondon.ac.uk)

If students have any queries about a claim which has been rejected, please contact the Department to request further information. Students can also discuss this feedback with staff in their Department if they believe that their individual needs have not been understood or adequately taken into account.

If students are providing information about their disability on the extenuating circumstances form, please note that this does not count as disclosure to the College as these forms are intended for use only by the Assessment Board. We strongly urge students to disclose any persistent medical condition, specific learning difficulty or disability to their relevant Faculty.

## **Where can I get more guidance?**

If after having read these notes a student feels that they need more help in putting forward their extenuating circumstances claim, the student can contact HE Student Support Services.

If a student requires feedback on the way in which the Assessment Board has handled their extenuating circumstances claim, please ask for feedback after the results have been released by contacting the Senior Curriculum Manager.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Extenuating Circumstances Categories**

The following guidance has been produced to help clarify what can be accepted as extenuating circumstances and the evidence required to support a claim. There are three categories, (A, B and C) set out below that should be consulted before completion of an Extenuating Circumstances Form, available from the College website.

#### **Category A: Acceptable reasons for claim**

Category A lists reasons that normally will be considered as acceptable reasons for submitting an extenuating circumstances claim and the appropriate evidence required to support the claim.

#### **Category B: Reasons for claim that may be considered**

Category B lists reasons that may be considered as acceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances and the appropriate evidence required to support the claim.

#### **Category C: Unacceptable reasons for claim**

Category C lists reasons that would normally be considered as unacceptable reasons for extenuating circumstances.

<b>Reason for EC Claim:</b>	<b>Category A: Acceptable reason</b>	<b>Category A: Evidence required</b>	<b>Category B: Reasons that may be considered</b>	<b>Category B: Evidence required</b>	<b>Category C: Unacceptable reason</b>
Serious Medical Condition	Serious personal injury, medical condition or mental health difficulty preventing attendance or completion of assessment or submission of work	Written evidence from a registered medical practitioner	Serious injury or illness to child, partner or close relative (parent)  Serious worsening or acute episode of an ongoing medical condition, mental health difficulty or disability	Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	Ongoing medical conditions, disabilities, learning difficulties or mental health conditions, for which the student is already receiving reasonable and appropriate adjustments unless there is evidence of this condition worsening or 'flaring up'.  Minor illnesses or injuries (such as colds, headaches, hay fever)

Bereavement	Death of close relative/significant other (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with the compassionate leave regulations)	Written evidence from a professional such as Undertaker, Coroner or Registrar  OR  Death Certificate	Death of close relative (not identified in Category A) or friend	Evidence identified in Category A  AND  Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner	
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Trauma	<p>Victim of serious crime (e.g. assault, sexual assault, mugging)</p> <p>Theft of work/computer equipment/materials required for assessment</p> <p>Direct experience of terrorist incident or natural disaster</p> <p>Major fire in residence</p>	<p>Written corroboration of reported crime from Police or other investigating authority</p> <p>Written evidence from registered medical practitioner, Police, Fire service or College Department (Estates)</p>	Family breakdown (such as divorce)	<p>Evidence from Solicitor</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Minor crime</p> <p>Financial problems or employment difficulties</p> <p>Accommodation problems or house moves</p> <p>General domestic / family problems</p> <p>Assessment/Test stress</p>
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Caring Responsibilities			Unexpected caring responsibilities caused by sudden serious illness or worsening of ongoing medical condition of child, partner or close relative	<p>Written evidence from patient's registered medical practitioner</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Ongoing caring responsibilities</p> <p>Caring responsibilities for minor illnesses, accidents or injuries</p>
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Court Attendance	Jury service or attendance at court or tribunal as a witness, defendant	Official correspondence from Court or Tribunal Authority			
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Miscellaneous			<p>Serious disruption caused by terrorist incident or natural disaster</p>	<p>Evidence of serious disruption to travel or other plans preventing attendance at or completion of assessment or submission of work</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Written evidence of impact to claimant from registered medical practitioner</p>	<p>Any circumstances which have not clearly impacted on academic performance or do not clearly relate to the timing of the assessment</p> <p>Visa problems</p> <p>Failure of IT equipment or poor working practises – failure to back up work for example.</p> <p>Minor private or public transport failure, holidays or booked travel arrangements</p> <p>Not realising/ remembering dates of deadlines</p>
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