

Policy Coversheet

Name of Policy:	Extenuating Circumstances Procedure
Purpose of Policy:	To provide details of how students can claim for extenuating circumstances
Intended audience(s):	All students registered on Staffordshire University awards and staff
Approval for this policy given by:	Academic Board
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Individual responsible for review:	Registrar
Authorising department:	Student & Academic Services



Staffordshire University Extenuating Circumstances Procedure 2017/18

Table of Contents

1. General
2. Grounds
3. Standard of Evidence
4. Categories and Outcomes
5. Procedure
6. Advice and Guidance
7. Appeal Against an Extenuating Circumstances Decision

1. General

- 1.1 These regulations apply to all students registered on courses that lead to a Staffordshire University award.
- 1.2 These regulations are supported by a Student Guide available at:
http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/info_centre/handbook/extenuating/
- 1.3 The student has an individual responsibility to manage their learning by attending examinations and meeting submission deadlines. If a student does not attend an examination or meet a submission deadline, they will be deemed to have not attempted the assessment.
- 1.4 If a student is unable to complete assessments to the best of their ability, unable to attend an examination or unable to meet a submission deadline due to serious circumstances beyond their control, it is possible to make a request for extenuating circumstances.
- 1.5 Extenuating circumstances are defined as significant factors which are beyond the student's control, which they could not have reasonably foreseen or prevented, and which would substantially impact on their ability to attend, complete or submit an assessment on time.
- 1.6 All extenuating circumstances requests will be considered by an Extenuating Circumstances Administrator.
- 1.7 The information that students provide under this process will be treated confidentially.

2. Grounds

- 2.1 The grounds on which extenuating circumstances can normally be requested are limited to significant factors which would have detrimentally affected a student's academic performance, such as, serious illness or the bereavement of a close family member or personal friend, normally leading up to, or at the time of assessment.
- 2.2 A student may not normally request extenuating circumstances on the grounds that their academic performance has been detrimentally affected by family, financial or other lifestyle problems. Furthermore, a student may not normally make a claim for extenuation for circumstances within their own control.
- 2.3 The University has put into place arrangements to make reasonable adjustments for students with a disability or an ongoing condition. Reasonable adjustments would normally have been taken into account in accordance with a Learning Support Agreement, and therefore not considered as an extenuating circumstance. However, extenuating circumstances may be requested when there is a sudden, significant and unforeseen exacerbation of a disability or ongoing condition.
- 2.4 Students completing an assessment in placement, should be mindful of any professional requirements for good health in practice. Students who feel that their health may be impairing their fitness to practise should discuss a possible withdrawal from placement, with their Tutor, and not rely on the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure.
- 2.5 The Student Guide provides a non-exhaustive list of examples of acceptable and non-acceptable extenuating circumstances. Please refer to

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/info_centre/handbook/extenuating/ for further information.

3. Standard of Evidence

- 3.1 All requests for extenuating circumstances **must** be supported by relevant and independent documentary evidence from a third party, such as a Doctor's letter or certificate, or a counsellor's statement. Retrospective medical evidence will not normally be acceptable. Supporting statements from University staff such as Personal Tutors or Student Guidance Advisors will also be accepted as evidence. The Student Guide provides a non-exhaustive list of acceptable forms of evidence. Please refer to http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/info_centre/handbook/extenuating/ for further information.
- 3.2 Students will be expected to submit all evidence on which they intend to rely and Extenuating Circumstances Administrators will not be able to obtain evidence on behalf of a student.
- 3.3 Should the Extenuating Circumstances Administrator require a student to provide further evidence in support of a request, the student will be given 10 working days in order to submit the evidence.
- 3.4 Any student who is alleged to have submitted falsified evidence to substantiate an extenuating circumstances request will be referred for consideration under the terms of the University's Academic Misconduct Procedures relating to false declarations.

4. Categories and Outcomes

Categories

- 4.1 The tables below display the categories for extenuating circumstances and the possible outcomes.

Deferral	The student is unable to attend, or submit for, a scheduled assessment of any sort
Late Submission	The student requests to submit an assessment within five working days after the deadline for submission
Mitigation	The student considers that their performance in assessment has been unexpectedly and adversely affected
<i>A working day is deemed to be Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays</i>	

- 4.2 Where appropriate a student may request both late submission and mitigation for the same assessment(s)

Outcome

Effect/Category	Upheld Outcome	Reject Outcome
Late submission	Work will be marked and counted as if it had been submitted by the original deadline.	A pass mark will be awarded if the work submitted was of a pass standard. This will be 40% for undergraduate courses and 50% for postgraduate courses. This will only occur if a reassessment opportunity is available to the student. If there are no further assessment opportunities available the student will have failed the assessment and this may lead to a module failure.
Deferral	<p>Initial attempt: the student will take the assessment again as if for the first attempt, it will not be capped at a pass mark.</p> <p>Referral attempt: the student will take the assessment again with marks capped at 40% for undergraduate courses and 50% for postgraduate courses.</p> <p>Either attempt will be taken at the earliest assessment opportunity.</p>	If the original deadline for submission of the work has passed, the assessment will be awarded a fail mark of N, due to non-submission.
Mitigation	<p>The student will be informed of the mark awarded for the assessment and the mark awarded for the module.</p> <p>Fail mark for the module at initial attempt: the student will be offered another opportunity to take the assessment for which the student claimed extenuation as if for the first attempt, it will not be capped at a pass mark.</p> <p>Fail mark for the module at referral attempt: the student will be offered another opportunity to take the assessment for which the student claimed extenuation with marks capped at 40% for undergraduate courses and 50% for postgraduate courses.</p> <p>Either attempt will be taken at the earliest assessment opportunity.</p> <p>Pass mark: achieved in the element or overall in the module you will not be able to repeat the assessment again in order to improve the mark.</p>	The student will be awarded the mark achieved. Please note the provisions relating to fail marks are contained under Regulation 4 of the Academic Award Regulations

5. Procedure

- 5.1 If a student is studying either on campus, distance learning or at one of our UK partnership organisations you can access the extenuating circumstances form via your e:VisionStaffsPortal.
- 5.2 Students studying overseas will continue to use the paper based system in line with their organisation's instructions.
- 5.3 Students must submit their extenuating circumstances request within 10 working days of the assessment submission deadline.
- 5.4 The student will be notified of the decision in relation to their extenuating circumstances request within 25 working days from the date the application is made (the decision will be sent to the University e-mail account).
- 5.5 The Award Board will take account of the recommendation of the Extenuating Circumstances Administrator when it considers the student's academic profile.

6. Appeal Against an Extenuating Circumstances Decision

- 6.1 Students may appeal against the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Administrator. The only grounds for appeal are that:
 - a) The decision did not take full and proper account of the extenuating circumstances request; OR
 - b) New, relevant and independent evidence, which for good reason the student had been unable to make available to the Extenuating Circumstances Administrator, had become available.
- 6.2 The appeal must be submitted in writing, to the Academic Regulations and Compliance Officer at regulations@staffs.ac.uk, within 10 working days of receiving notification of the decision.
- 6.3 The Academic Regulations and Compliance Officer may make one of the following decisions:
 - a) dismiss the appeal as ineligible
 - b) not uphold the appeal
 - c) uphold the appeal and amend or vary the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Administrator
- 8
- 6.4 In all circumstances the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure will be deemed to be concluded and the student will be advised of their right to take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.
- 6.5 If the student fails to make a claim in accordance with the provisions of the Extenuating Circumstances Procedure, in circumstances where they are able to demonstrate that there were valid reasons for this, they may Appeal against an Award Board Decision.

7. Advice and Guidance

7.1 Students can obtain advice from a number of areas within the University, in particular the Student Guidance Team, Students' Union Advice Centre and the Information Points. This can include guidance on submitting a request or advice on the types of evidence to provide in support of a request.

8 Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Under the Higher Education Act 2004, Staffordshire University subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of student appeals. Once the University's internal procedures for the review of a student appeal have been exhausted, the University will issue you with a 'completion of procedures letter' to confirm that the University's procedures are complete and to advise you to contact the OIA if you wish to have your appeal reviewed further (provided that it is considered eligible under the OIA's rules).

Equality issues have been taken into account during the development of this policy and all protected characteristics have been considered as part of the Equality Analysis undertaken.