

Extenuating Circumstances - Extract from Chapter 13 of the Academic Quality Handbook 2016/17 September 2016

13.1 Extenuating Circumstances for Taught Provision

13.2.1 Definitions and principles

(1) A student who believes that his/her performance in or ability to complete an assessment has been adversely affected by extenuating circumstances may request that those circumstances are recognised by the University. Claims for extenuating circumstances are judged on clear and transparent criteria as set out in the regulations and where necessary are considered by a cross-University Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

(2) For the purposes of this regulation, extenuating circumstances refer to immobilising ill health during the assessment period, bereavement of a close relative or friend during the assessment period, or other similarly profound experience or difficulty that is outside the control of the student. In respect of students in employment, where study is subsidiary to the employment, pressure from employment pressure from employment may also be considered as extenuating circumstances.

(3) The following are not normally considered to be extenuating circumstances:

a) Minor, non-immobilising health problems with a duration of less than one week including, but not limited to: colds, sore throat, sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm).

b) Loss of work including, but not limited to: as a result of theft, the breakdown of a computer or other electronic equipment, mislaying an electronic storage device or hard copy.

c) Difficulties in submitting for assessment due to technical problems (not caused by failure of the University's systems)

d) Difficulty in gaining access to available materials such as books or videos.

Students should guard against such difficulties by keeping electronic back-ups of work, together with hard copies; keeping drafts of work in progress; and managing the time allocated for completing the assessment.

e) Non serious domestic or personal disruptions including, but not limited to: moving house, change of job, holidays, weddings, oversleeping, cultural and/or educational adjustment, normal stress and anxiety experienced in relation to assessment.

Students are expected to be able to take reasonable steps to ensure that non serious domestic or personal disruptions do not affect assessments.

f) The normal financial difficulties which may be experienced by students, unless there has been a sudden and unforeseen change in financial circumstances.

Students experiencing short-term financial difficulties should seek advice and support from Student Services.

g) Long standing impairments or medical conditions, unless it can be demonstrated through evidence that there has been an increase in severity at the time of the assessment, such that the student's academic performance may have been adversely affected.

Students should report long standing impairments and conditions to Student Services to ensure that, where appropriate, adjustments are made to the assessment regime and support arrangements are put in place well before assessment commences.

(4) The University's approach to considering requests for extenuating circumstances is based on two principles:

a) The object of an assessment is to measure achievement, not potential; what a student has done, not what he/she might have the potential to do.

b) Each student is responsible for submitting assessed coursework on time, for presenting him/herself for written examinations at the appropriate time and place, and for submitting information on extenuating circumstances.

(5) As a result:

a) Members of staff of the University may not grant extensions. In the event that work is submitted late, the work is marked in the normal way and then penalised in accordance with the regulations i.e. the mark is capped at the minimum pass mark (40% for levels 4,5 and 6 and 50% for Level 7) if the work is up to 1 weeks late for first attempts or a mark of 0% is recorded if the work is late for re-assessments. Both the initial mark and the penalised mark are recorded in the first instance. Any decision to lift the late submission penalty is made in accordance with the regulations for extenuating circumstances.

b) Work will not be accepted more than 1 week after the original date for submission. In such cases, where extenuating circumstances are approved, the relevant Programme Team will inform the student that the work is to be submitted at the next appropriate assessment point.

c) Extenuating circumstances must not be taken into account in the marking of a student's work.

d) Academic staff, Examining Boards and the Extenuating Circumstances Panel are not permitted to modify or adjust marks to compensate for extenuating circumstances.

(6) It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they have read and understood the University's procedures for Extenuating Circumstances for Taught Programmes. Further information and guidance is available from the Academic Office. A student's misinterpretation or lack of awareness of the procedures will not be considered a valid reason for non-compliance.