

## **Extenuating Circumstances Policy**

### **Introduction**

1. The Final Board of Examiners will take into account any information provided by a student on the adverse effect of illness or other factors on assessment performance. Where a case for extenuating circumstances is accepted, then the Board may take a range of actions to ensure that as far as possible, students are not disadvantaged in their assessment whilst also preserving the integrity of standards and awards.
2. The Final Board of Examiners can only do this if it made aware of the circumstances in advance and they are properly documented (e.g. by medical evidence). If therefore there are factors that have affected students' ability to complete or undertake assessed work, these must be made known to the School as soon as possible.

### **Definition**

3. An extenuating circumstance is a significant event that significantly affects a student's ability to complete an assessed piece of work or project, or prevents a student from undertaking an assessed piece of work or project altogether. These circumstances should normally be unforeseen and unpreventable.
4. Examples of extenuating circumstances include but are not limited to:
  - Personal illness
  - Serious illness or bereavement of a close relative or friend
  - Extreme family situations
  - Becoming a victim of crime
5. In all cases, students should provide as much supporting evidence as possible.
6. Disabled students<sup>1</sup> may only use the extenuating circumstances provision where there is good reason for not having advised the School of their disability prior to their assessment. All disabled students are encouraged to contact the Student Support and Wellbeing team with a view to agreeing reasonable adjustments. The extenuating circumstances procedure should be used where:
  - Their condition has altered in a significant way since they started their course and any reasonable adjustments were put in place, and this has had an impact on the student's performance;
  - Reasonable adjustments were agreed too late to be applied for the piece of assessed work affected;
  - A new diagnosis is received and reasonable adjustments could not be put in place in time;
  - A student has a fluctuating condition.

<sup>1</sup> A person has a disability under the Equality Act 2010 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities'.

## **Applying for Extenuating Circumstances**

7. Responsibility for notifying the School of possible extenuating circumstances lies with the student who should notify the Registrar as soon as possible in advance of the assessment deadline or submission date.
8. Retrospective claims for extenuating circumstances shall only be accepted where a student is incapable of contacting the School before the assessment deadline or date. In these circumstances, the student is required to inform the School within no later than ten working days of the assessment date where practicable. The student will be required to provide evidence of their inability to submit a claim in advance of the assessment date.
9. The student should set out in writing the exact nature of the extenuating circumstances and describe the impact of them, including on the assessment concerned. As much supporting evidence as possible should be provided. A claim for extenuating circumstances on medical grounds should normally be supported by written evidence from a registered medical practitioner. All evidence must be submitted in English. Where evidence from a medical practitioner is not available, the reason for this should be explained in the claim.
10. Other evidence might include:
  - A hospital discharge letter
  - A letter from an external support service or counsellor
  - Letter from the police or the court
  - A police report , including a crime reference number
  - A solicitor's letter
  - A death certificate
  - An order of service
11. Evidence must cover the time period for which the student is requesting Extenuating Circumstances to be applied for.

## **Confidentiality**

12. Extenuating circumstances claims will often involve the processing of sensitive personal data. The School will make every effort to ensure that the data is kept confidential and only supplied to members of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel appointed to consider the claim.
13. Student whose extenuating circumstances are private and sensitive are encouraged to discuss their situation with the Registrar in confidence, who will advise on the appropriate course of action.

## **Consideration process**

14. On receipt of a claim, an Extenuating Circumstances Panel chaired by the Registrar and comprising of the student's Head of Department and a minimum of two other members shall consider whether a submission for extenuating circumstances should

be accepted. Members of the panel may be drawn from other departments and./or from professional service areas.

15. Where a claim for extenuating circumstances is accepted, the Chair of the Panel will report to the Final Board of Examiners the work affected and the likely impact of the student's performance.
16. The Final Board of Examiners may decide to take any of the following actions in respect of an accepted claim for extenuating circumstances:
  - (a) Where a student has failed to achieve the required standard for an assessed piece of work, the Board may either:
    - (i) set aside any grade assigned and allow the student a new attempt according to a timetable agreed by the Board; or
    - (ii) waive the affected piece(s), but only if the course learning outcomes have been met through the student's other assessed work; or
    - (iii) where the work was a marginal fail consider the student as a pass.
  - (b) Where a student has failed to complete one or more assessed pieces of work, the Board may either:
    - (i) allow the student a new attempt according to a timetable agreed by the Board; or
    - (ii) waive the requirement to complete the work, but only if the course learning outcomes have been met through the student's other assessed work.

## **Appeals**

17. Students may appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners in respect of their claim for extenuating circumstances by using the Academic Appeal Procedure. [https://nfts.co.uk/sites/default/files/u102/Documents/Student\\_Policies/academic\\_appeals\\_procedure.pdf](https://nfts.co.uk/sites/default/files/u102/Documents/Student_Policies/academic_appeals_procedure.pdf)

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