

Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. Throughout their studies, students are required to complete and submit, or sit, a wide range of assessments. This will require students to balance their workload and use time-management skills to ensure that assessments are submitted to stated deadlines. However, New College of the Humanities (the College) recognises that there may be serious adverse circumstances outside of a student's control that prevent them from completing assessments.
2. The aim of the Extenuating Circumstances Policy is to:
 - 2.1 Make clear the serious adverse factors that the College and Solent University (the University) will consider as Extenuating Circumstances and the process to be followed for submission; and
 - 2.2 Ensure fair and equal treatment of all students when considering Extenuating Circumstances.
3. Students are encouraged to seek support from the Academic Services Coordinator (ASC). They should consider whether it is in their best academic interests to retake an assessment at a later date on a deferred basis or to submit a request for a late submission up to five working days after the original deadline.
4. Students who encounter circumstances that adversely affect their attendance or tuition for a period in excess of 20 working days should discuss this with their Head of Faculty. It may be in the student's interests to suspend their studies, or to consider an alternative mode of study, until such time as they have been able to resolve the circumstances in question.
5. Students with permanent or long-term conditions that impact their ability to study must be assessed by the Learning and Assessment Support Officer (LASO) (who will make any necessary referrals) in liaison with the student's Head of Faculty, and an agreed support plan will be put in place. Such students will not be eligible for Extenuating Circumstances as a result of their condition, unless they suffer an acute episode which may then fall under the criteria for Extenuating Circumstances.
6. The term 'programme' is used to refer to the curriculum route that leads to a named award as defined in each programme specification. The term 'course' is used to refer to each 30- or 15-credit component of study as defined in each course descriptor.
7. The [Student Welfare Policy](#) covers longer-term matters which impact on a student's learning experience.

DEFINITION

8. The College and the University define Extenuating Circumstances as:
"Significant, unforeseen, short-term circumstances, beyond the control of the student that result in a major impact on their ability to complete an assessment."

INELIGIBLE EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES

9. Extenuating Circumstances do not encompass normal life challenges that individuals are expected to deal with routinely. The following incidents will not be considered as valid for submission under this policy:

The down-time of College computer networks (except for extended periods of time) and problems with personal IT equipment

Loss of computer data (such data should be backed-up)

Accommodation and travel problems

Personal/part-time job commitments

Personal holidays

Peaks in assessment work demands

Religious festivals: these are known in advance and students should build any associated commitments in to their assessment planning

Financial difficulties

Complaints against staff or in relation to programme delivery. These are managed through the College's [Student Complaints Policy and Procedure](#)

Students should plan their work so that they can accommodate the disruption of minor illness

THE 'FIT TO STUDY' PRINCIPLE

10. The College and the University operates a 'fit to study' approach to Extenuating Circumstances. This means that all students who submit an assessment are, by doing so, declaring themselves fit to be assessed. The student will determine if:
- 10.1 They are 'fit to study' and undertake the assessment; no Extenuating Circumstances application will be accepted under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
 - 10.2 They have experienced an extenuating circumstance but will be 'fit to study' with additional time; an assessment can then be submitted with a claim for an extension to the deadline date of five working days.
 - 10.3 They are not 'fit to study' even with an extension; no assessment is submitted and a claim is made under the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.
11. An Extenuating Circumstances claim will not be considered for poor performance for an assessment. There is an exception to this where there is evidence that the student was not fit to determine their capacity to be assessed when deciding

whether to make a submission. A claim may be made as an academic appeal and must be accompanied by independent documentary evidence.

12. Exceptionally, students who are ineligible to progress to the next level and are required to repeat failed courses may apply to retake the whole level, including courses passed, where they have evidence that their studies were affected due to Extenuating Circumstances beyond their control. Students must submit an Extenuating Circumstances application as an appeal of the results with relevant evidence as detailed in [Annex A](#).

EVIDENCE

13. A claim for Extenuating Circumstances must meet the College's and the University's published criteria and be accompanied by valid and independent evidence, showing the impact of the circumstances on the student's ability to sit or complete a particular assessment (as stated in [Annex A](#)).
14. Students are encouraged to speak to the ASC for advice on whether their circumstances meet the stated criteria and on how to make an effective submission. Supporting evidence should refer directly to how the Extenuating Circumstances affected the student's ability to complete or sit assessments.
15. A statement from a parent/guardian/spouse/partner/ or a member of faculty will not be accepted as evidence without additional, independent documentary confirmation.
16. The student must present all evidence in English. Where, for example, an overseas student is taken ill in their home country and corroborating evidence is provided in the language of that country, then it should be accompanied by a translation, certified officially as being correct e.g. by a Notary Public or by a member of staff who is fluent in that language.
17. Absence through illness must be evidenced by a statement from a medical practitioner and the University may seek to verify such evidence. Medical self-certification is not acceptable evidence for Extenuating Circumstances submissions.

TIMING OF AN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES APPLICATION

18. An Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Application Form¹ must be submitted to the ASC prior to the relevant Progression and Award Board. Any Extenuating Circumstances submissions made after the Board meeting will only be considered in accordance with the [Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

¹ <https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/about-us/nch-academic-handbook/>*

* From the webpage>policies and procedures>undergraduate degree>Extenuating Circumstances Form. Please download the form and complete electronically.

EXTENSIONS TO THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE DATE

19. Students may submit assessments up to five working days after the deadline submission date where Extenuating Circumstances have impacted on their learning and where late submission would put them in a position of being 'fit to study' and to complete the work.
20. In these circumstances, students should submit an Extenuating Circumstances Form² to the ASC, indicating that they wish the University's Extenuating Circumstances Panel to consider their formal request for an extension to the submission date. The request must state the Extenuating Circumstances category under which the student is claiming an extension and must include relevant evidence.
21. All extension requests will be considered by the University's Extenuating Circumstances Panel at the first available opportunity. Dependent on the timing of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel, such requests might not be considered until after the student has submitted the assessment.
22. If the extension request is approved by the University's Extenuating Circumstances Panel, the student will be given the full grade awarded for the work, unless the claim was for a referred assessment in which case the mark will be capped at 40%. If the request is not approved, the assessment mark will be capped at 40% for first attempts, and referrals will be treated as a non-submission and awarded a mark of zero.
23. Students who submit later than five working days after the deadline submission date - with or without an Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Application Form for late submission - will not have work marked. The work will be regarded as a non-submission for assessment purposes.
24. The College and the University can normally only accommodate requests for extensions to deadlines for written text assessments.
25. Students are advised to seek the advice of the ASC regarding the possibility of rescheduling assessments relating to group work, presentations and other practical based assessments. With the College's approval, these may be rescheduled as long as the assessment is completed within the submission period as outlined in the assessment brief.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PANEL

26. The University's Extenuating Circumstances Panel has delegated authority from the Progression and Award Board and ultimately from the University's Academic Board to determine the outcome to award a deferral or an extension for courses and assessment elements. The decisions of an Extenuating Circumstances Panel are reported to the relevant Progression and Award Board.
27. The University's Head of Student Registry and Student Systems will constitute the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and arrange for meetings to be held on a regular

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* From the webpage>policies and procedures>undergraduate degree>Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Application Form. Please download the form and complete electronically.

basis in order to consider student submissions and provide timely decisions. The College will provide information to the Panel members, who will include:

- 27.1 Head of Student Registry and Student Systems or nominee (Chair)
 - 27.2 Head of Student Services or nominee
 - 27.3 A representative from the University's Students' Union
 - 27.4 A academic representative from the Extenuating Circumstances standing panel, with no personal knowledge of the students being presented
28. A panel will be quorate provided the Chair and two of the three other panel members are in attendance. The Chair may use discretion to hold panel meetings by correspondence where appropriate, ensuring that the panel is able to make thorough and reasonable decisions.
29. The University's Head of Quality Management will provide regulatory guidance to Extenuating Circumstances Panels on the discharge of their functions. The panel will not make a judgment on the extent to which a particular set of circumstances has impacted on an individual student's performance. Therefore, in considering submissions, panel decisions will be influenced solely by:
- 29.1 Whether the circumstances align with [Annex A](#).
 - 29.2 The adequacy of the documentary evidence provided and whether it aligns with the requirements of [Annex A](#).

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

30. Extenuating Circumstances Panels may exceptionally need to take action outside scheduled meetings. In such cases, the panel may delegate responsibility to the Chair of the Panel. The University's Policy, Governance Information Service will ensure that Chair's Actions are recorded and reported to the next meeting of the Panel.

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PANEL OUTCOMES

31. The Extenuating Circumstances Panel's decision will be entirely based on the evidence provided by the student. A Panel cannot endorse Extenuating Circumstances where no evidence has been submitted. Decision on an outcome can be 'pending' where exceptional events mean delay in obtaining evidence e.g. death of a family member.
32. Where they deem it necessary, the panel may exceptionally require the student to submit further evidence. However, panels will not interview students as part of the decision-making process.
33. Where an Extenuating Circumstances Panel accepts the circumstances and associated evidence as valid, then the panel will either award a deferred result for the assessment for which Extenuating Circumstances are accepted or will confirm the full assessment mark where a student has requested an extension to an assessment submission date.
34. Where an Extenuating Circumstances Panel does not accept that the circumstances and/or associated evidence are valid, then the panel will not award

a deferred result or accept the extension to the submission and the assessment and course outcome will be determined in accordance with the assessment regulations.

STUDENT APPEALS AGAINST THE DECISION OF AN EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES PANEL

35. A student may make an appeal against a decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel on the following grounds in accordance with the College's [Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures](#):

"Where new, relevant, written Extenuating Circumstances are presented [...] supported by appropriate evidence, that for good reason were not originally made available to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel."

36. The University's Head of Student Registry and Student Systems will ensure that the College's ASC is informed of the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel for each student as soon as possible so that they can inform the student about the decision and about the appeal procedure.

CONFIDENTIALITY

37. Student Extenuating Circumstances claims will normally be processed by the ASC, who may take advice from the College's Registrar where necessary, and then disclosed only to relevant members of the University's Registry and Extenuating Circumstances Panel. Exceptionally, students may request their claim to be treated confidentially; in this case details are restricted purely to members of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

38. The College and the University will respect the confidentiality of information supplied by a student in support of an application for Extenuating Circumstances. By submitting an Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Application Form, students agree to the College and the University holding their personal data for the purposes of processing an Extenuating Circumstances claim. The College and the University will hold this data in accordance with their notifications under the General Data Protection Regulation and other Data Protection Laws and the College's and the University's records retention policies.

ANNEX A: EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES AND VALID EVIDENCE

Category ref:	Valid circumstance	Examples of valid supporting evidence	Timeframes
A	<p>Acute Health issue/flare up</p> <p>A short-term illness or acute episode, new diagnosis or medication change for a long-term condition that is likely to incapacitate the student during the period they might have reasonably been expected to spend time on preparation for submission or for sitting an assessment. This encompasses personal injury/accident with extended impact.</p>	<p>A doctor’s medical certificate relevant to the period of the claimed Extenuating Circumstances and stating that the student was unfit to study.</p> <p>A signed statement from a doctor in evidence of the requirement to attend hospital would also be appropriate.</p> <p><u>Student self-certificates will not be accepted.</u></p> <p>A statement from a recognised independent professional relevant to the period of the claimed Extenuating Circumstances and stating that the student was unfit to study.</p>	<p>Maximum of 20 working days.</p>
B	<p>Illness of a dependent</p> <p>Acute illness/accident affecting a dependent/ close relative that required the constant attention of the student.</p>	<p>A doctor’s medical certificate signed to verify the illness, or other medical evidence signed by an appropriate medical professional, together with a statement by the student, explaining why their personal attention was necessary and no other family member could be expected to provide support.</p>	<p>Maximum of 20 working days.</p>
C	<p>Bereavement</p> <p>Death of a close family member, partner or close friend.</p>	<p>Production of a copy Death Certificate, Coroner’s report or order of service.</p>	<p>Maximum of 20 working days.</p>

Category ref:	Valid circumstance	Examples of valid supporting evidence	Timeframes
D	<p>Court Attendance</p> <p>Jury Service or attendance at Court or a Tribunal as a witness, defendant or plaintiff, on the date the assessment was due to be submitted or assessment sat OR impacting on the period during which the student might reasonably have been expected to prepare for submission or revise for the assessment.</p>	<p>Official correspondence from the Court or Tribunal confirming attendance requirement.</p>	<p>Length of court attendance plus one week.</p>
E	<p>Victim of Crime</p> <p>The student was the victim of a crime that was reported to the appropriate authority for investigation and the nature of the crime was such that it was likely to have prevented the timely submission of an assessment or sitting an assessment; or to have impacted adversely on the student during the period in which the student might reasonably have been expected to prepare for submission or for sitting an assessment.</p>	<p>Copy of police/crime report.</p> <p>A statement from a recognised independent professional that is relevant to the period of the claimed extenuating circumstances and stating that the student was unfit to study.</p>	<p>Maximum of 20 working days.</p> <p>Where future issues arise, which are linked to the original crime, e.g. court attendance, other relevant categories of this policy should be used.</p>
F	<p>Military Reserves</p> <p>The student is in the military reserves (Navy/Air Force) and is required to undertake annual training.</p>	<p>Official correspondence from the Commanding Officer stating that the commitment cannot be moved to another date.</p>	<p>Length of attendance at training.</p>
G	<p>Sport commitment at national/ county level</p> <p>The student is selected to compete at national or county level at sporting events that require absence from the College on the date the assessment was due to be submitted or assessment sat.</p>	<p>Official correspondence from the relevant sporting body confirming the requirement to be available on specified dates.</p>	<p>Length of attendance at sporting event.</p>

Category ref:	Valid circumstance	Examples of valid supporting evidence	Timeframes
	Training requirements associated with sporting commitments are not deemed valid Extenuating Circumstances.		
H	Not relevant to the College.		
I	<p>Retake level rather than individual courses</p> <p>Where students, who are ineligible to progress to the next level, believe their studies in the courses passed and not being retaken were affected due to circumstances beyond their control.</p>	A statement from a recognised independent professional that is relevant to the period of the claimed Extenuating Circumstances and stating that the student was unfit to study.	Submitted as an appeal within 10 working days of the release of the results.
J	<p>Other exceptional and personal circumstances that do not come under the categories listed</p> <p>Where students believe they have experienced severe and exceptional circumstances that are not listed here but would reasonably be considered as valid Extenuating Circumstances, then they should discuss this with their Head of Faculty in good time to meet any stated submission deadlines.</p> <p>The Head of Faculty will inform the ASC, who will consult the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel and then advise the student if the circumstances are deemed appropriate for submission to the panel.</p>	Where the Extenuating Circumstances are considered to be valid, students will be advised by the ASC of the nature of the evidence required to support the submission.	Maximum of 20 working days.

Title: Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Policy					
Approved by: Academic Board					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Author	Location	Proposed next review date
2.2	February 2020	February 2020	Registrar	Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/ undergraduate degree	July 2021
2.1	December 2018	December 2018	SAS	Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/ general	July 2019
2.0	December 2018	December 2018	SAS	Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/ general	July 2019
Referenced documents	Undergraduate Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures; Student Welfare Policy; Student Complaints Policy and Procedure; Undergraduate Extenuating Circumstances Application Form				
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Enabling Student Achievement; Assessment; GDPR				