

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Guidelines

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Executive Team Member Responsible:	ASDAS
Individual Responsible:	Registrar
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1. What are Extenuating Circumstances

An extenuating circumstance (EC) are events which are **sudden, unexpected significantly disruptive** and **beyond your control** which may have significantly impaired academic performance in an assessment. For example, you may have had a bout of illness or a bereavement just before an assessment was due.

For a claim to be accepted, you must be able to demonstrate that the extenuating circumstance are all of the following:

- Outside your control
- Unforeseen and unforeseeable
- Serious
- True
- Happened either at the same time as the assessment due date or during the preparation period immediately before the assessment due date

For extenuating circumstances to be considered, you must provide evidence, normally an official document, signed as appropriate and should state the dates during which the circumstances applied.

Extenuating circumstances are not designed to give you an unfair advantage over another student in your assessment; the aim is that all students are to be assessed on equal terms. All the work you submit for assessment is graded on its merits without the consideration of any extenuating circumstances known to the marker. Extenuating circumstances are not used by the Assessment Board to alter marks. If your request for extenuating circumstances is approved, then this is indicated on the final mark sheet that is seen by the relevant Assessment Board which will consider your extenuating circumstances in relation to whether you may progress to the next stage of your programme, in determining an award classification where your marks are borderline or there are conflicting classifications in the profiles of your grades, or when considering you for an aegrotat award.

2. How to submit a claim for extenuating circumstances.

You will need to complete an [extenuating circumstance form](#).

You should refer to Table A (see Appendix 1 of this document) to see examples of valid extenuating circumstances and the evidence required. Please also refer to table B (see Appendix 2 of this document) to see examples of invalid extenuating circumstances which would normally not be approved by the Extenuating circumstance panel.

You will be required to present your evidence to us to support your claim. Evidence must be presented in English and, where required, official translations must be provided by the student. It is not the responsibility of the School to translate any evidence provided by the student and any untranslated evidence may not be considered. There must be a clear relationship between the period you have indicated, and the evidence given in support of your claim. For example, a letter from a doctor should indicate the time period in which your medical condition has affected, or will affect, your studies. You will also have to indicate the nature of the evidence that you are providing in support of your application, for example, a medical/counsellor's certificates, and/or the names of witnesses who could make a written statement on your behalf, etc.

LST reserves the right to check the authenticity of all documentary evidence submitted in support of your application. Any student who submits documentation that is not authentic may be subject to the School's disciplinary procedures.

When do I apply for Extenuating Circumstances?

You should apply for extenuating circumstances as soon as the 'circumstances' either actually or potentially have an effect on your learning. Students must normally submit their completed Extenuating Circumstances form for consideration of extenuating circumstances to the Registrar, at least 72 hours prior to the Assessment Due Date and time, and in the case of an essay, project, portfolio etc., by the given submission date and time.

In exceptional circumstances, it is possible to apply for extenuating circumstances after the event, but this must be done immediately following completion of the assessment. Additionally, all applications for Extenuating Circumstances must be made at least 7 days before the relevant Assessment Board. Dates of the Assessment Board relevant to your course are to be found on the [LST's Calendar](#). **Applications for Extenuating Circumstances cannot be made retrospectively. This means that you cannot apply for extenuating circumstances after the Assessment Board has confirmed your marks and decided about progression or awards.** However, you have the right to appeal your results via the [Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure](#).

2.1 Late EC Submissions

If you cannot obtain the necessary evidence in time to submit your EC claim, you must still submit your EC request form on time and indicate that your evidence is to follow.

You must submit your late evidence no more than four weeks after submitting your EC request form or before the next Assessment Board if less than 4 weeks away. This is due to the fact that marks are confirmed by the Assessment Board.

3. Consideration of Extenuating Circumstance claims

All EC claims are considered by a Panel consisting of the Registrar (or their nominee), the Chaplain and the Equality, Diversity and Disability Advisor. Faculty members are consulted when needed, particularly in relation to placement activities and deadlines.

Application outcomes are normally notified within 10 working days of receipt when evidence accompanies the form. However, it can take longer during peak periods (April to June and during the August reassessment period).

4. Outcome of an Extenuating Circumstance request

In practical terms if you have your request for extenuating circumstances approved, then this may allow you an extensions of an additional 5/7 days in which to complete an assessment or to defer the assessment at a time when your extenuating circumstances will not be unduly influencing your performance. In practice this means that you are able to be assessed at another time in the future without incurring any penalty, although you still normally have to comply with the rules regarding the completion of all the work at one level before you are able to progress to the next level of your programme. The 'deferred' assessment details (i.e., extension deadline, new assessment dates, submission details) will be communicated to you.

If you choose to take the assessment within a module in which you have been granted extenuating circumstances, then you are required to meet the submission dates and times, your work is marked in the usual manner, and you will be assigned a grade in the normal fashion. This mark cannot be changed. If you fail the module/module element, then as in all other assessment you are allowed to be re-assessed, with your mark capped at 40. You are not permitted to be re-assessed just because you have extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances allows for you to legitimately defer an assessment without penalty; it does not allow for you to be re-assessed unless you have failed the assessment.

Please note that if your assessment is a presentation/recital to your peers, it may not be possible to provide an equivalent environment for the assessed presentation/recital following an extension.

Students should not expect their marks and feedbacks to be released at the same time as their peers following an extension request.

5. Consequences of Extenuating Circumstances

6.1 Academic Consequences

- Progression to the next stage/level/year of your degree programme is not automatic. It is determined by the amount of module credit you have achieved in each academic year.

Each programme will have its own progression regulations based on academic requirements or stipulated by professional or accrediting bodies. Normally 110 credits (for full time study) or 50 credits (for part-time study) will need to be passed in order to progress to the next level/year of study.

Make sure you read the programme specification and/or your programme handbook to understand the progression regulations for your particular programme.

There will be progression implications as a result of deferring your assessment, especially during the August resubmission period. Please speak to a member of the registry team if you are concerned.

6.2 Financial Consequences

There could be financial implications as a result of deferring your assessment. i.e., additional years of study, Non-attending status as a student. Please discuss with a member of the Registry team or Student Finance if you have any queries.

Students in receipt of Disability Support Allowance should seek advice (inclusion@lst.ac.uk) regarding the impact of deferring assessments.

5.3 Students on a Visa

If you are a student on a visa, you will only be able to defer your assessment to the next assessment period under exceptional circumstances and as long as it does not affect the length of time you need to complete your course. If you have to defer for a long period, we will inform the UK Visas and Immigration and they will curtail your leave. You will need to leave the UK and apply for a new Entry Clearance when you are ready to come to the UK and resume your studies.

For more information, please contact inclusion@lst.ac.uk

6. Students with disabilities

Students with disclosed disabilities, who are on the disability register, will be given **two** 7-day automatic extensions per academic year due to their disability and they can choose to apply these to any essay deadlines they wish. They must contact a member of the registry team (registry@lst.ac.uk) at least a week before the essay deadline to request this extension. Additional extensions may be authorised on a case-by-case basis using the normal extenuating circumstance process, if your disability impacts you so severely that your condition has deteriorated.

7. Students with caring responsibilities

Students with disclosed caring responsibilities, who are on the caring register, will be given **two** 7-day automatic extensions per academic year due to their circumstances and they can choose to apply these to any essay deadline they wish. They must contact a member of the registry team (registry@lst.ac.uk) at least a week before the essay deadline to request this extension. Additional extensions may be authorised on a case-by-case basis using the normal extenuating circumstance process if there are new unexpected circumstances that occur close to a deadline, that have significant impact on your situation.

Requesting a review of an Extenuating Circumstances decision

You cannot contest the outcome of an EC request on the grounds of academic or professional judgement. However, you may request a review of an EC decision if you feel that there has been a significant procedural error in the handling of your request. Requests for review must be submitted within two weeks of the EC decision.

Decisions will be reviewed by the ASDAS or the Chair of the AB if the ASDAS has been involved in the original decision.

The ASDAS/Chair of the Assessment Board should consider the request and make one of the following decisions:

- To uphold the original decision, or
- To retain the original decision but amend specific details such as length of extension, Deferral deadline etc., or
- To make a new decision.

Appendix 1

TABLE A

Grounds of Valid Extenuating Circumstances

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances that would fall within the relevant definition and accepted as extenuating circumstances. These are based on sector best practice from the Academic Registrars' Council and the Office for the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

Normally Acceptable	Suggested sources of evidence	Notes
1. Illness, accident or severe trauma or an unexpected deterioration in an ongoing illness or chronic medical condition	Certification of illness or serious accident of the student. It is recognised that it can be difficult to get timely verification from hospitals, but you should submit your claim, pending receipt of evidence within 4 weeks or by the next Assessment Board	Evidence to show that reason occurs at the time of an assessment. Certification must be current, and not produced retrospectively
2. An unpredictable deterioration in an ongoing medical condition, disability or mental health condition. Or an unexpected issue impacting on completion of assessments because of a disability or health condition	Letter of support from the School's Disability Adviser or Pastoral team detailing significant fluctuations are expected as part of the ongoing condition/illness. Medical certification or independent verification may also be required.	Where relevant statements are included in the Educational Notification document issued to a student by the School's Disability Adviser (and Pastoral team where applicable), these should be consulted as appropriate.
3. Recent death (< 3 month) of a close relative or friend.	Death certificate or Evidence from a religious leader supporting the student or a copy of the dated funeral service. (See point 4. for long term bereavement)	Close" can refer to parents (and guardians), children and siblings, a spouse/partner and it may include friends, in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren if it can be shown that the relationship was close.
4. Serious levels of prolonged trauma, stress or anxiety	Evidence from GP, Medical practitioner or counsellor	Could be caused by long term effects of bereavement or diagnosed conditions.
5. Unforeseen accident/Serious illness of a close relative	Medical certification.	Could include sudden deterioration of an ongoing illness.

6. A significant change to the condition or circumstance of someone for whom the student has a caring responsibility	Relevant medical certification or evidence from social services	Illness or other event that precipitates more care required by the student just before or on the deadline/exam
7. Serious personal disruption.	Independent verification such as supporting third-party evidence.	Fire, burglary, requirement to appear in Court etc. relevant to the date of the assessment event or the period leading up to it. Travel problems are not normally accepted as students are expected to plan ahead.
8. Significant change of employment circumstances.	Employer letter providing evidence	NB: THIS IS NOT NORMALLY VALID FOR FULL TIME STUDENTS
9. Evidence of a declared disability that is provided too late to be taken into account in the deadline for assessment.	Corroboration from the Disability Adviser or specialist tutor/mentor.	If there is a delay to assessment and/or diagnosis of a disability due to no fault of the student.
10. A life changing situation has caused mass disruption, stress or delay to studying, for example, pregnancy and/or giving birth	Confirmation of the birth, i.e. birth certificate	Giving birth, illness and/or complications during pregnancy or unforeseen caring responsibilities may be considered with supporting evidence. Interruption of studies may be considered
11. When a student has experienced delays starting a placement that are outside of their control.*	Confirmation from placement provider, email trails with provider.	A student should endeavour to accrue at least 10 hours by the assessment/essay deadline

***Placement hours (TBC by TC Faculty)**

- 1) *If a minimum no of hours (i.e. 10 hours of more) have been gathered, the assessment deadline will be extended by 7 days for ext.circumstances. An extension will also be granted for the gathering of placement hours until the August reassessment period.*

OR

- 2) *If a student is struggling to gather even the minimum hours required by the essay deadline (i.e. less than 10 hours), the essay deadline will be extended until the reassessment deadline in mid August; this same deadline will also operate for gathering the necessary hours. HOWEVER, option 2 may impact the ability of a student to progress to the next level (if they fail) as their will forego a 2nd submission attempt in the same academic year.*

Appendix 2

TABLE B

Examples of invalid Extenuating Circumstances

The following is a non-exhaustive list of circumstances unlikely to be regarded as falling within the relevant definition and is unlikely to be accepted as extenuating circumstances

NOT normally acceptable	Examples
1. Alleged medical conditions (lasting more than 7 days) without supporting evidence	Claims will not be accepted without appropriate evidence.
2. Alleged medical conditions (lasting more than 7 days) without contemporaneous evidence or sufficiently detailed subsequent evidence.	If a student does not consult a medical practitioner at the time of the illness (lasting more than 7 days), it is not acceptable for a student to obtain generic corroborative medical statements at a later date. A letter from a medical practitioner stating, for example, "the student informs me that he/she was unwell during...." will not be deemed acceptable supporting evidence.
3. Social activities.	Hectic social life, parties, visits by/to friends, sporting fixtures.
4. Temporary self-induced conditions	Excessive alcohol intake, drug taking (unless possibly for a registered medical user influenced by the medical treatment involved including prescribed medication for certain conditions where it is known that there may be adverse reactions e.g. drowsiness.
5. Minor ailments and other conditions (not applicable to Music students if this affects their ability to sing/play)	Coughs, colds, sore throats, sprains (other than in the writing hand/arm). Accidents/illness affecting relatives or friends unless serious or the student is the sole carer.
6. Examination stress, bunching of assessments.	Examination stress or stress in practice placement, bunching of assessments will not, by itself, be considered as an extenuating circumstance. Support on how to deal with Exam Stress and Time Management is available at inclusion@lst.ac.uk
7. Domestic or personal disruptions which could have been anticipated or planned	Moving house, holidays, weddings, or other events where the student either has control over the date or may choose not to participate. Change of job or "normal" job pressure (exceptional crises at work might be acceptable), failed travel arrangements, illness of pets, oversleeping, misreading examinations timetable or other assessment details, poor time management.
<i>Continues on next page.</i>	

8. Study-related	Computer/technology difficulties (unless the failure is due to the responsibility of the school), losing work not backed up on computer disk or cloud services, deadline congestion, examination congestion, missing books, examination rescheduling, delays in printing, photocopying and/or binding of assessed work.
9. Examination conditions	Disruption in the examination room: poor lighting, ventilation or heating, excessive noise, illness or behaviour of other students. Normally such conditions should be reported immediately to the invigilators who will take remedial action and pass reports on to Registry where relevant.