

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

for taught programmes

effective from the 2021/22 academic year

Document Owner:	Assistant Director, Student & Academic Services (Registry)
Principal Contact:	Sarah Hills, Academic Registry Manager, SAS
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Summary/Description:	
This document outlines the principles and procedures for consideration of unforeseen circumstances outside of a student's control which may impact on performance in assessments.	

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1. PURPOSE AND PRINCIPLES

- 1.1 We have a duty to each individual student to ensure that assessments are conducted fairly, and that you have the opportunity to demonstrate your true level of academic performance.
- 1.2 Recognising that you may sometimes suffer serious illness or other problems which are outside of your control and which may prevent you from undertaking an assessment or showing your real level of performance, we have a system where you can put forward claims for consideration if you have been significantly affected by such problems. This procedure therefore enables you to request:
 - a) A deadline extension where you are unable to submit coursework by the original submission date; or
 - b) A deferral to the next permitted assessment point where your circumstances have prevented you from undertaking that assessment; or
 - c) That the extenuating circumstances that you believe may have impaired your performance in a completed assessment are taken into consideration.
- 1.3 You may still have to demonstrate that you have achieved the required learning outcomes at a point in time when the extenuating circumstances no longer impact your performance.
- 1.4 A successful claim for extenuating circumstances cannot change any individual grade you receive for assessment. However, it may influence the overall decision taken by the Progression and Award Board when it considers your academic progression or awards your qualification.
- 1.5 Extenuating Circumstances Panels are responsible for the consideration of extenuating circumstances claims, acting under the delegated authority of the relevant Progression and Award Board. Operationally, this responsibility is delegated to appropriate members of university staff.
- 1.6 A sample of extenuating circumstances claims and the decisions made will be audited annually to ensure that claims are being considered consistently and appropriately.
- 1.7 We will respect the confidential nature of the information that you provide in support of an application for extenuating circumstances in compliance with relevant data protection legislation. Confidential information will be shared as necessary with university staff involved in considering the claim.
- 1.8 All timescales referred to in this document are measured in 'calendar days' which means every day of the week including Saturdays and Sundays, except for university closures days such as public holidays and Christmas closures. Full details of term dates and university closures days can be found here [Term Dates](#).

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to all taught programmes leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate award of the University of Greenwich at level 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7.
- 2.2 This Policy applies to partnership provision unless specific alternative arrangements have been agreed between the University of Greenwich and the partner institution and is included in the Memorandum of Agreement.
- 2.3 A **long-term condition** which may affect your studies and assessments is not usually considered an extenuating circumstance. However, some conditions can be considered as extenuating circumstances where the requirements detailed in section 5.4 and 5.5 are met.

Further information on how we ensure that you receive a parity of opportunity in assessment and examinations in relation to your long-term condition can be found in the [Examination & Assessment Regulations for Students with Disabilities, Specific Learning Difficulties and Long-Term Medical Conditions](#)).

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 **Extenuating circumstances:** Circumstances which are exceptional, unforeseeable, short-term events which were outside of your control and which can be shown to have had a direct and substantial impact on your on your ability to prepare for or undertake an assessment. This may include an impact on your capacity to study prior to an assessment, on your ability to complete an assessment, and/or on your performance during an assessment.
- 3.2 **Extension:** Where your circumstances prevent you from submitting your work by the original deadline. An extension request gives you an additional 14 calendar days beyond the original deadline to submit the assessment with no penalty applied to the grade. Applies to coursework only.
- 3.3 **Deferral:** Where your circumstances have prevented you from undertaking an assessment. A deferral request allows you to delay taking the assessment until the next opportunity for submission (as determined by the Progression and Award Board) with no penalty applied to the grade.
- 3.4 **Impaired performance:** Where your circumstances have significantly affected your ability to demonstrate your true capability. An impaired performance request allows the Progression and Award Board to take your circumstances into account when considering your academic profile. Where you have passed the assessment, the Progression and Award Board can choose to offer you a reassessment opportunity to improve your existing grade. Where you have not passed the assessment, the Progression and Award Board can choose to offer you a reassessment opportunity.

- 3.5 **Deadline:** For coursework, this is the original due date for the submission of the assessment. For exams, this is the date on which that exam is timetabled to be held.
- 3.6 **Long-term conditions:** A disability, Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), mental health condition and/or long-term fluctuating medical condition for which you are registered with the Student Wellbeing Services of the university and have a Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP).
- 3.7 **Progression and Award Board (PAB):** At the end of each stage of your programme, Progression and Awards Boards meet to decide whether you have met the requirements for progression or for an award. They ensure that grades and classifications are awarded fairly and consistently across the university in accordance with the Academic Regulations for Taught Awards.

4. SUBMISSION OF CLAIMS

- 4.1 In order for your claim to be accepted, you must demonstrate that the extenuating circumstances prevented you from:
- a) submitting coursework by the published deadline date; or
 - b) submitting coursework or sitting an exam; or
 - c) performing as well in coursework or an exam as might have been reasonably expected.
- 4.2 Claims must be submitted **no later than 14 calendar days** after the assessment deadline or exam date. Claims should not be submitted so far in advance that the impact of the extenuating circumstances cannot be assessed.
- 4.3 All claims for extenuating circumstances must be submitted via the online form through the portal. Please see the [Extenuating Circumstances](#) web page for further details and guidance on how to submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim.
- 4.4 You must specify which outcome you are seeking at the time of submitting your claim. You may request one of the following:
- i) An extension request of 14 calendar days from the original deadline – you will submit the work and only require additional time to do so. Extensions can only be granted for coursework, they do not apply to examinations, time constrained assignments or practical assessments; OR
 - ii) A deferral request – you will not submit the work or sit the exam and are requesting to submit at the next opportunity determined by the Progression and Award Board; OR
 - iii) That your impaired performance is considered – you have submitted the work on time without an extension or sat the exam but feel the work does not demonstrate your true abilities.

- 4.5 Where you have multiple assessments that are covered by the same extenuating circumstance, you can detail all assessments on one claim submission.
- 4.6 Where you submit your claim close to the assessment deadline, it cannot be guaranteed that a decision on your claim can be notified before the assessment deadline is reached.

It is your responsibility to decide whether to submit your coursework by the deadline or to attend your timetabled exam.

5. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

- 5.1 Submissions of extenuating circumstances will not be valid without independent supporting evidence, which should be submitted online with the extenuating circumstances claim. You must provide evidence for every claim submission that you make, irrespective of whether you have provided it with any other claim.

Further information and guidance on evidence requirements can be found on the [Extenuating Circumstances](#) web page.

- 5.2 Where some or all evidence is not available at the time of submission of the claim, you will receive email notification that the evidence must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the email. If the evidence is not received within the 14 calendar days, a decision will be reached on the claim.
- 5.3 Late evidence to support a claim submitted by the deadline may exceptionally be considered where you are able to show good reason why the evidence could not be provided with the claim submission.

Evidence received after the Progression and Award Board can only be submitted and considered through an [Academic Appeal](#).

- 5.4 Where you have a Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP) that confirms and supports that you have a fluctuating mental health condition and/or long-term medical condition, you can submit a copy of your GIP as evidence to support a claim.
- 5.5 Where you have a Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP) that confirms and supports that you have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) that permits you extra time in exams, you can submit a copy of your GIP as evidence to support a claim for an extension of time to submit coursework.
- 5.6 If your extenuating circumstances are unrelated to your long-term condition, you must submit your claim with appropriate supporting evidence.
- 5.5 We reserve the right to check the authenticity of all documentation submitted as part of an extenuating circumstances claim. If we believe that you have submitted evidence which may not be genuine, you may be referred to the university's [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#).

6. CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS

- 6.1 All claims will be dealt with in the first instance by appropriate members of university staff or, where necessary, the Extenuating Circumstances Panel acting under the delegated authority of the relevant Progression and Award Board.
- 6.2 An initial decision on your claim will normally be communicated to you within 14 calendar days. This decision may not be final at this point and may include a request for more information or further evidence.
- 6.3 All extenuating circumstances claims that are submitted after the deadlines set out in section 4.2 will be rejected automatically and without consideration.
- 6.4 Where it has not been possible for you to submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim by the deadline set out in section 4.2 for valid and demonstrable reasons, the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#) can be used.

7. ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Free independent advice and advocacy is available from the Greenwich Students' Union Advice Service.

Email: suadvice@gre.ac.uk

Web: www.greenwichsu.co.uk/advice

Online contact form: www.greenwichsu.co.uk/advice/triageform

For students at Medway, please visit: www.greenwichsu.co.uk/medway/advice

8. RELATED PROCEDURES

- [Academic Regulations for Taught Awards](#)
- [Academic Appeals \(Taught Awards\)](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)