

Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure

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Document Owner:	Assistant Director, Student & Academic Services (Registry)
Principal Contact:	Jack Beresford-Zahra, Academic Registry Manager (Student Casework & Policy) (Registry)
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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

- 1.1 We have a duty to each individual student to ensure that assessments are conducted fairly, and that you, the student, have the opportunity to demonstrate your true level of academic performance.
- 1.2 We understand that you may sometimes have different circumstances that are outside of your control which may prevent you for taking an assessment at a scheduled time or showing your true ability. Therefore, to support you throughout your academic experience, we have an Extenuating Circumstances (EC) procedure for you to submit claims for consideration, where you have been significantly impacted to understand what we can take into account for you.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This Policy applies to:
- (i) all taught programmes leading to an undergraduate or postgraduate award of the University of Greenwich at level 3, 4, 5, 6 or 7
 - (ii) the Masters by Research (MRes) oral examination of the research project
- 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 6.4 and 6.5 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 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. This only applies to assessments that are considered to be coursework.

- 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 **Assessment:** A specific assessment activity within a module such as coursework, reports, exams, presentations, OSCE, performances etc:
- 3.6 **Coursework:** Assessments that have a specified submission deadline, includes all forms of coursework, take-home test, and other types of submitted assignments.
- 3.7 **Time Constrained Assessments:** Assessments that take place during a set timeframe such as timetabled exams, presentations, OSCEs, and lab tests.
- 3.8 **Deadline:** For assessments that are considered to be coursework, this is the original due date for the submission of the assessment. For time constrained assessments, this is the date on which that assessment is timetabled to be held.
- 3.9 **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).
- 3.10 **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. PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The EC procedure allows you to request:
 - a) A deadline extension - where you are unable to submit an assessment considered as coursework by the original submission date; or

- b) A deferral - where you are unable to take the assessment and are asking to take it at the next available opportunity; or
 - c) Impaired performance - where the extenuating circumstances you have may have impaired your performance in a completed assessment and this is taken into consideration.
- 4.2 A successful claim for ECs cannot change any individual grade you receive for an item of assessment. However, it may influence the overall decision taken by the Progression and Award Board (PAB) when it considers your academic progression or awards your qualification.
- 4.3 Extenuating Circumstances Panels are responsible for the consideration of extenuating circumstances claims, acting under the delegated authority of the relevant Progression and Award Board.
- 4.4 We will respect the confidential nature of the information that you provide in support of a claim for ECs in compliance with relevant [data protection legislation](#). Confidential information will be shared as necessary with university staff involved in considering the claim. We may also share your details with relevant University support services such as Counselling or Disability Support where the nature of your claim or the number of claims you have submitted suggests that additional support may benefit your wellbeing.
- 4.5 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](#).
- 4.6 We understand that it can be uncomfortable to tell us about your circumstances and acknowledge that disclosing the details of some circumstances can be difficult. However, despite any discomfort you might feel, if you don't disclose your circumstances at a time when you could have done so, we might not be able to take them into account at a later date.

5. EC CLAIM CATEGORIES

- 5.1 There are three different types of EC claim. Each has a different purpose, and it's important you choose the right one for your situation. You must specify which one of the following outcomes you are seeking when you submit your claim:
- (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 assessments considered as 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 take the time constrained assessment and are requesting to take it 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.

5.2 Where you have been granted a 14-calendar day extension, there is no opportunity to submit a claim for a further extension for the same attempt at the assessment. A request for a deferral or impaired performance may be made where the criteria for those requests are met (including that you are within 7 calendar days of the original, non-extended, deadline).

6. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

6.1 Submissions of EC claims will not be valid without independent and current supporting evidence (except in cases of self-certification). This evidence must be submitted online with your EC 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.

6.2 Self-certification –the University permits the use of self-certification on **three** occasions in an Academic Year (additional claims will need to be independently evidenced). Each instance of self-certification may cover multiple assessments due within a 7-calendar day period.

Information and guidance on evidencing a self-certified EC can be found on our website <https://www.gre.ac.uk/student-services/extenuating-circumstances>.

During the academic year self-certification can be used to request an extension, a deferral or impaired performance.

During the resit period self-certification can be used to request a deferral or impaired performance. Self-certification **cannot** be used to request an extension during the resit period.

6.3 Where some or all evidence is not available at the time of submission of the EC claim you must detail this in your EC claim notifying the University as to why your evidence is not available. You will receive email notification, in response to your EC claim, 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 based on what was submitted.

6.4 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.

6.5 Where you have a Greenwich Inclusion Plan (GIP) that confirms and supports a specific

learning difficulty, you can submit a copy of your GIP as evidence to support your claim.

- 6.6 If your extenuating circumstances are unrelated to your long-term condition, you must submit your EC claim with the appropriate supporting evidence.

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

- 6.7 We reserve the right to check the authenticity of all documentation submitted as part of an extenuating circumstances claim. If at any time, including after an initial outcome has been made, we believe that you have submitted evidence which may not be genuine, you may be referred to the university's [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#). Consideration of your extenuating circumstances claim will be suspended until the outcome of the disciplinary process has been completed.

7. SUBMITTING A CLAIM

- 7.1 In order for your claim to be accepted, you must demonstrate that your ECs have prevented you from:

- a) submitting or completing assessments by the published deadline date; or
- b) taking an exam or other time constrained assessment at the correct time; or
- c) performing as well in an assessment as might have been reasonably expected.

- 7.2 Your claim must be submitted **no later than 7 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.

- 7.3 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.

- 7.4 Where you have multiple assessments that are covered by the same extenuating circumstance, you can detail all assessments on one claim submission.

- 7.5 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 assessment.

8. CONSIDERATION OF CLAIMS

- 8.1 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 (PAB).

- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 All extenuating circumstances claims that are submitted after the deadlines set out in section 7.2 will be rejected automatically and without consideration.

9. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

9.1 Extension claims – first sit submissions

- a) Where you have an accepted extension and submit your work up to 14 calendar days after the official assessment deadline, no penalty will be applied to the grade achieved.
- b) Where your claim has been rejected:
- (i) If you submit your work no later than 14 calendar days after the official assessment deadline, the grade will be capped at the minimum pass mark.
 - (ii) Coursework submitted later than 14 calendar days after the official assessment deadline will be recorded as a ‘non-submission’ or a grade of ‘0’.

9.2 Extension claims – resit submissions

- a) Where you have an accepted extension and submit your work no later than 14 calendar days after the official assessment deadline, no penalty will be applied to the grade achieved.
- b) Where your claim has been rejected:
- (i) Coursework submitted after the official assessment deadline will be recorded as a ‘non-submission’ or a grade of ‘0’.

9.3 Deferral claims

- a) Where you have an accepted deferral claim for a first sit assessment you will normally be offered an opportunity to retrieve the assessment(s) during the resit period. No penalty will be applied to the grade achieved.
- b) Where you have an accepted deferral claim for a resit assessment you will normally be offered an opportunity to repeat the assessment(s) in the next academic year with no penalty applied to the grade achieved. There are no further resit opportunities within the same academic year.
- c) Where your claim has been rejected:
- (i) If you submit coursework by the original deadline or sit the exam, your work will be marked, and the grade achieved will be recorded and used to calculate your overall module grade.
 - (ii) If you submit coursework by the extension deadline, your work will be marked, and the grade achieved will be recorded. Pass grades will then be ‘capped’ at

the minimum pass mark and the capped mark used to calculate your overall module grade.

- (iii) If you fail to submit your work by the extension deadline or sit the exam, the item of assessment will not be recorded and a 'non-submission' or 0 grade will be recorded.

9.4 Impaired performance claims

- a) Where you have an accepted claim and achieve a pass grade, the PAB will use its academic judgement to decide whether to offer you another attempt at the assessment to improve the grade - if they feel that the grade you have achieved is of a similar standard to your other grades and will not significantly affect your award classification you may not be offered another attempt.
- b) Where you have an accepted claim but have not achieved a pass grade, you will normally be offered another opportunity and the grade will not be capped. The PAB will decide the timing of any further attempts, which will either be during the resit period or in the next academic year.
- c) Where your claim has been rejected:
 - (i) If you submit coursework by the original deadline or sit the exam, your work will be marked, and the grade achieved will be recorded and used to calculate your overall module grade.
 - (ii) If you submit coursework by the extension deadline, your work will be marked, and the grade achieved will be recorded. Pass grades will then be 'capped' at the minimum pass mark and the capped mark used to calculate your overall module grade.
 - (iii) If you fail to submit your work by the extension deadline or sit the exam, the item of assessment will not be recorded and a 'non-submission' or 0 grade will be recorded.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

- 10.1 You can appeal against the outcome of an Extenuating Circumstances claim on the grounds set out in the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).
- 10.2 Where you have not been able to submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim by the deadline set out in section 7.2 and can evidence the reasons why you were unable to submit your claim, you can request that your claim is considered using the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

11. 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

12. RELATED PROCEDURES

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