

Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) Regulation – Guidance for Students and Staff

1 Introduction:

- 1.1 These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the Extenuating Circumstances for Taught Programmes Regulation and Section 6 of the ARC Reference Document on Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances for University Practitioners, which can be found at:
<http://www.arc.ac.uk/uploadedfiles/documents/ARCAppealsExtCircs.pdf>
(the relevant extract from the ARC guidance is included as Appendix 1 of this Guidance)
- 1.2 These guidance notes and accompanying flowcharts are designed to assist staff and students in their reading of the Regulation and in understanding how it will be applied in practice.
- 1.3 Students who have detailed queries regarding any aspect of the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations should contact their Programme Leader.
- 1.4 'Working days', as referred to in the guidance, will include Mondays to Fridays, and will exclude Saturdays and Sundays. Therefore, where a 5 working day extension is applied to a piece of coursework due on a Monday, the new submission date will be Monday of the following week.
- 1.5 For all extended deadlines, the submission time will remain as no later than 15:00 on the new assignment deadline.

2 Important

- 2.1 Students are entitled to self-certify on one occasion per semester or term for an automatic extension to a submission deadline.
- 2.2 Consideration of extension requests and Delayed Assessments/Reassessments (DA/Rs) will be undertaken by Extenuating Circumstances Panels (ECPs), or by staff acting on behalf of ECPs.
- 2.3 Staff and students should note that the EC regulation allows for students to be granted a DA/R for assessments that have been passed but where extenuating circumstances have impacted on the assessment attempt.
- 2.4 Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year

3 What adjustments are available for students presenting extenuating circumstances?

- 3.1 An extension to a deadline for submitting summative assessed work. This may be, for example, Coursework, Written Assignments, Dissertations, Projects or Presentations.
- 3.2 A delayed assessment or reassessment, for an assessment event which is scheduled to take place at a particular time/date and which will need to be

rearranged. This may be, for example, an Examination or other practical assessment.

3.3 A Further Reassessment may be approved where the ECP is not persuaded that the student was prevented from having a reasonable reassessment opportunity but wish to offer the student a further opportunity to sit the reassessment. In such cases, the original reassessment mark shall stand and both marks will be available to the Board of Examiners when making academic decisions. The expectation is that the Board will use the higher of the two marks when making academic decisions.

3.4 An adjustment made by the Board of Examiners.

3.5 Reported extenuating circumstances and resulting adjustments will be provided to the ECP, which may recommend further appropriate adjustments. Automatic extensions, but not the reported circumstances, will be reported to ECPs.

4 What should students do if they wish to report extenuating circumstances?

4.1 Students should complete the Extenuating Circumstances Report form and submit it to the HE Administrator at the relevant campus which supports the programme on which they are registered, even if the module is owned by a different campus. The form should indicate the adjustment being requested and should be submitted together with supporting evidence, where required, by the deadline indicated in the Regulation.

4.2 Where required, students should submit acceptable evidence (see Appendix 1) to support their report as soon as possible and no later than 10 working days after submitting the form..

4.3 Where no evidence can be obtained, or where students are not able to provide it by the deadline, the reasons should be explained clearly in the appropriate section on the form, giving as much relevant information as possible. In such cases, these details will be considered together with the circumstances reported.

4.4 On submission of the first report per year in respect of an assessment deadline, an extension of five working days will be applied and no supporting evidence is required (5.1.1). Students may check their new submission date..

4.5 Students should note that, where an automatic extension is sought, the circumstances reported must comply with the ARC Reference Document on Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances (see Appendix 1)

4.6 Subsequent reports of circumstances relating to submission deadlines, will be treated as applications for extensions and processed in accordance with the Regulation.

4.7 An automatic extension will apply to multiple assessments occurring on the same day.

4.8 Where a student is reporting circumstances relating to a coursework submission for the first time in an academic year but is requesting longer than 5 working days, and where the request is subsequently rejected by the ECP,

the 5-working day automatic extension will apply.

- 4.9 Students should note that it is their responsibility to indicate on the form the module numbers, dates and times (if relevant) of all assessments for which an adjustment is sought.
- 4.10 Whilst applications for deadline extensions are under consideration, students should not assume that the extension will be approved and should continue to plan to submit by the published deadline. If a decision is still pending by the submission date, students may wish to continue to work in anticipation of an approved extension.
- 4.11 Students should retain electronic copies of all versions submitted.
- 4.12 Students should note that self-certification for absence does not automatically result in an extension to an assessment deadline and vice versa. The two should be treated as separate and students are required to complete both processes if they are simultaneously reporting absence from study and reporting circumstances for entitlement to an assessment extension or to apply for a DA/R.
- 4.13 Decisions will be notified to students by e-mail.

5 What will happen if a student reports extenuating circumstances or provides supporting evidence after the deadline?

- 5.1 Requests for extensions received after the submission deadline will require accompanying evidence and will be referred to the Programme Area Leader for consideration.
- 5.2 Where a student submits a request for a Delayed Assessment/Reassessment (DA/R) more than 48 hours after the assessment has taken place, or where the supporting evidence is submitted more than 10 working days after submission of the Report to the HE Administrator, the application will be referred to the Chair of the relevant ECP, who will decide whether the application can be accepted and considered for a DA/R.
- 5.3 Where a student reports extenuating circumstances for consideration by the Board of Examiners later than 10 days prior to the ECP but prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners, this shall be referred to the Chair of the ECP who will take a decision as to whether the late report can be accepted and considered in time for reporting any recommendations to the Board of Examiners.
- 5.4 Where extenuating circumstances are reported too late to be considered by, or after the meeting of the Board of Examiners, or where the ECP Chair rejects the student's application to submit a late report or evidence, the student may consider whether they have grounds to submit a Stage One Appeal.
- 5.5 ECP dates will be published on the student VLE.
- 5.6 Where an extension is approved for longer than 20 working days, a new assessment task will be provided, where necessary, and a new deadline set.

Appendix 1

Extract from ARC Reference Document on Academic Appeals and Extenuating Circumstances for University Practitioners

6.3.2 Universities should explain what are **likely** to be acceptable extenuating circumstances. The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples that a university would commonly regard as extenuating circumstances that could have seriously affected performance and could not have been remedied in the time available:

- Bereavement – death of close relative/significant other (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence in accordance with the compassionate leave regulations)
- Serious short-term illness or accident (of a nature which, in an employment context, would have led to an absence on sick leave)
- Evidence of a long term health condition worsening
- Significant adverse personal/family circumstances
- Other significant exceptional factors for which there is evidence of stress caused

6.3.3 The list above allows universities to use their discretion based on the given facts of a particular case within a broad set of criteria.

6.3.4 Universities should also explain what is **unlikely** to be acceptable extenuating circumstances. The following is a **non-exhaustive** list of circumstances unlikely to be regarded as falling within the relevant definition and, where there is conflict with the above list, a decision will need to be made on each case:

- Alleged statement of a medical condition without reasonable evidence (medical or otherwise) to support it
- Alleged medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period of learning period for which appropriate adjustments for extenuating circumstances have already been made
- Alleged medical condition supported by ‘retrospective’ medical evidence – that is, evidence that is not (contemporaneous) in existence at the same time as the illness, eg a doctor’s note which states that the student was seen (after the illness occurred) and declared they had been ill previously
- If there is a reasonable case that circumstances relied on were foreseeable or preventable
- Long-term health condition for which the student is already receiving reasonable or appropriate adjustments
- Minor illness or ailment, which in a work situation would be unlikely to lead to absence from work
- Holidays
- Financial issues
- Personal computer/printer problems
- Poor practice eg no back-up of electronic documents
- Claims that students were unaware of the dates or times of submission or examination

- Late disclosure of circumstances on the basis that students 'felt unable – did not feel comfortable' confiding in a staff member about their extenuating circumstances
- Poor time management

6.4.5 The evidence should normally be independent third party evidence but there may be occasions when the university wishes to use its discretion in relation to the type of evidence it will accept. Where evidence *can* be provided it *should* be provided but there may be exceptional cases where, for a variety of confidential reasons (eg sensitive personal data), this is not possible.

6.4.6 A non-exhaustive list of examples of commonly accepted evidence would include:

- Death certificate
- Medical/health certificate (with relevant date to the assessment). Some university GP systems have a specific form linked to grading extenuating circumstances.
- Letter of support/explanation from a support service in the university, eg Disability Service
- Letter of support/explanation from third party