

**LTC15D174**

**Title:** *Revisions to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Guidance for Students and Staff*  
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### **Issue**

LTC approved amendments to the Extenuating Circumstances policy at its meeting on 16 March 2016 to clarify that where multiple submission deadlines fall on or within the five working day self-certification period any piece of work which falls due in the period covered by the self-certified extension will have the deferred submission deadline applied.

At its meeting on 11 May LTC approved a clarification to the use of self-certification for group assessments.

Given that both the policy and the guidance were last reviewed in 2014 both documents have been reviewed and updated to add the amendments agreed by LTC this academic year and to clarify other aspects of the documentation as indicated by the tracked changes.

### **Recommendation**

LTC is asked to endorse the proposed changes to the policy and guidance.

### **Resource Implications**

None

### **Risk Implications**

None

### **Equality and Diversity**

There are no equality or diversity implications associated with this proposal.

### **Timing of decisions**

Both the policy and guidance will be in place for the academic year 2016/17.

### **Further Information**

Michele Pavey, Learning and Teaching Manager ([M.Pavey@uea.ac.uk](mailto:M.Pavey@uea.ac.uk) x2097) **Background**

**Attachments** Revised policy and guidance for staff and students

## Extenuating Circumstances for Taught Programmes

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 The Regulations provide a definition of extenuating circumstances, the guiding principles on which the regulations are based and the procedural framework within which extenuating circumstances in relation to Taught Programmes shall be managed.

### 2 Definition of Extenuating Circumstances

- 2.1 An extenuating circumstance is:
  - 2.1.1 An acute factor or an acute expression of a chronic condition that can be evidenced, is outside the student's control and which affects performance in and/or engagement with assessment
  - 2.1.2 Normally, a set of circumstances, the effect of which will impact the student within 3 weeks of the relevant assessment event or deadline
  - 2.1.3 Certain other circumstances that are explicitly referenced within the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations

### 3 Principles

- 3.1 The University shall apply the following principles:
  - 3.1.1 The minimisation of bureaucracy and ensure timely consideration of cases;
  - 3.1.2 The regulations have been designed to be reasonable, sensible, fair and student-focused;
  - 3.1.3 The University shall adopt the extant list of extenuating circumstances provided by the Academic Registrars' Council (ARC). This list shall serve as a formal guide to the range of acceptable extenuating circumstances and can be found at: <http://www.arc.ac.uk/uploadedfiles/documents/ARCAppealsExtCircs.pdf>

### 4 Extenuating Circumstances

- 4.1 Extenuating circumstances may be considered in relation to:
  - 4.1.1 Extension requests for those items of assessment classified as 'Deadline' (Coursework, Written Assignment, Dissertation, Project, Presentation);
  - 4.1.2 Requests for Delayed Assessment for those items of assessment classified as 'Event' (Examination, Course Test,

Objective Structured Clinical Examination, Objective Structured Pharmacy Examination, Practical);

- 4.1.3 Decisions about progression and/or final classification
- 4.2 There shall be an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) in each School of Study.
- 4.3 Each ECP shall consist of a pool of no less than 4 academic members one of whom will act as Chair) appointed by the Head of School.
- 4.4 The Chair of the ECP shall be a member of a Board of Examiners within the School of Study.
- 4.5 Chairs of Boards of Examiners shall not be permitted to act as the ECP Chair for the Board of Examiners of which they are the Chair, but may be a member of the ECP.
- 4.6 A minimum of 2 members of the ECP are required to engage in the consideration of cases, with the exception of the pre-Board ECP meeting, where at least 3 members must be in attendance.
- 4.7 The consideration of extenuating circumstances need not involve a physical meeting of members of the ECP if alternative methods of discussion and mutual deliberation are available.
- 4.8 There shall be time limits for the reporting of extenuating circumstances by students that will vary according to the type of adjustment being sought.
- 4.9 Students should report any circumstances affecting their study as soon as possible and no later than the deadlines detailed below.
- 4.10 Students must report any circumstances that they wish to be considered to their Learning and Teaching (LTS) Hub.
- 4.11 Where a student is unable to supply all relevant evidence at the point of reporting the extenuating circumstances, the student shall normally provide any outstanding evidence within 10 working days of application.
- 4.12 The Chair of the relevant ECP or nominee may grant further time (beyond 10 working days) to obtain evidence where good reasons for needing the additional time are provided.
- 4.13 Notwithstanding the requirement detailed at 4.10 above, where a student believes that the relevant circumstances are of a highly confidential nature they may report the circumstances to the ~~Dean of Students~~ Director of Student Services.
- 4.14 Where a student reports circumstances as permitted under 4.13 above, the Director of Student Services ~~Dean of Students~~ shall either:

Commented [MP(1)]: Clarification that ECPs should have at least 4 members

Commented [MP(2)]: Clarification that 10 days refers to working days

Commented [DG(3)]: Can also ask for evidence just to be considered by Chair?

Commented [MP(4)]: Change reflects change in title of role holder

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Confirm the confidential nature of the circumstance and provide the the ECP with a statement of its severity. The substantive detail of the circumstances shall remain confidential to the Director of Student Services~~Dean of Students~~.

OR

Determine that the nature of the circumstances does not merit the confidentiality of treatment detailed at 4.13 above and advise the student that they should report their extenuating circumstances to their LTS Hub, in accordance with 4.9-4.11 above.

## 5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances

### 5.1 Extension Requests (deadline assessments)

5.1.1 Extensions of five working days shall be approved automatically on receipt of an Extenuating Circumstances ~~form request~~ on one occasion in an academic year per student. There shall be no requirement for supporting evidence and the student may treat the request as approved on submission of the ~~form request~~. A The request must be submitted to the relevant Hub via e:Vision } task and in advance of the submission deadline in order to be treated by way of automatic approval.

5.1.2 Any piece of work which falls due in the period covered by the self-certified extension will have the deferred submission deadline applied.

5.1.3 Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year. When students request more than one extension within an academic year, any additional applications must be supported by acceptable evidence.

5.1.4 Where assessment is a group submission which requires a contribution from all group members rather than a group pieces where members submit individually, extensions will be granted to all members of the group. Only the group member who actively requests the extension will be deemed to have used their self-certification.

~~5.1.2~~5.1.5 Additional applications that meet the ARC criteria may be approved by LTS Co-ordinators.

~~5.1.3~~5.1.6 Additional applications that cannot be mapped to the ARC criteria or do not have clear evidence shall be considered by the relevant EC Panel.

~~5.1.4~~5.1.7 ECPs shall reach a decision and the student will be advised of the outcome within 3 working days of the request being received in the LTS Hub. In exceptional circumstances it

Commented [MP(5)]: this was approved by LTC at its meeting on 16 March

Commented [MP(6)]: this incorporates the change approved by LTC at its meeting on 11 May 2016.

may be necessary to extend this deadline and the student shall be advised in writing where this is the case.

Commented [MP(7)]: clarification added to cover exceptional circumstances

~~5.1.5~~5.1.8 Where extension requests are supported by appropriate third party evidence, such as a medical certificate, they shall be approved by the relevant LTS Co-ordinator. This includes retrospective requests where the ~~medical certificate~~third party evidence clearly covers the period to which the extension request relates.

5.2 Delayed Assessment/Reassessment (DA/R) Requests (event assessments)

5.2.1 Students may be permitted to repeat an 'event' assessment due to circumstances beyond their control that affect performance or attendance at the event.

5.2.2 Students may be offered a Delayed Assessment (where circumstances affected the initial assessment), Delayed Reassessment (where circumstances affected the reassessment attempt) or Further Reassessment (where circumstances affected the assessment or reassessment but are not deemed sufficient for a Delayed Reassessment).

5.2.3 A Delayed Assessment cancels the assessment that it replaces. A Further Reassessment provides an additional opportunity without cancelling the original assessment attempt.

5.2.4 Where an application for a DA/R is approved, s/he may choose whether or not to take the new assessment and replace their existing mark, which shall be voided. The approved Delayed Assessment/Reassessment (DA/R) will normally take place during the next assessment period.

Commented [MP(8)]: Additional clarification relating to DA/R

~~5.2.5~~5.2.5 Where a student attends an event or submits the new assessment ~~does take a~~the new assessment, the recorded mark shall be the mark received for the new assessment and not the better of the 2 marks achieved.

~~5.2.5~~5.2.6 A DA/R may be considered where:

- the student failed to attend;
- the student attended the assessment but believes that s/he did not have a fair attempt due to extenuating circumstances
- the delivery of the programme has hampered the ability of students to be assessed fairly

~~5.2.6~~5.2.7 Where the request for DA/R rests on medical circumstances, students must seek medical evidence on the day of the assessment, unless prevented from doing so.

~~5.2.7~~5.2.8 A request for a DA/R must normally be submitted within 48 hours of the assessment.

~~5.2.8~~5.2.9 All relevant supporting evidence, including, where appropriate, explanations of any failure to obtain medical evidence in accordance with 5.2.7 above, must normally be submitted not later than 10 working days after the request for DA/R is received in the LTS Hub.

~~5.2.9~~5.2.10 The Chair of the ECP, or nominee, may approve a later deadline for the provision of supporting evidence.

~~5.2.10~~5.2.11 Bad weather conditions are acceptable for DA/R only where advice to the public has been to avoid unnecessary journeys and where public transport is not running.

~~5.2.11~~5.2.12 DA/R requests shall be considered by LTS co-ordinators in the first instance with reference to the ARC guidance noted above.

5.2.13 Cases which do not meet the ARC criteria, are complex or where rejection is recommended shall be referred to the relevant ECP.

### 5.3 Pre-Board ECP Meetings

5.3.1 The purpose of a Pre-Board ECP meeting is to consider extenuating circumstances that may impact on decisions about progression or classification.

5.3.2 All extenuating circumstances and associated adjustments shall be reported to the Pre-Board ECP.

5.3.3 Where extenuating circumstances have already been considered and adjustments made (previous extension and/or DA/R requests), the ECP shall consider whether any additional adjustments may be appropriate.

5.3.4 Students must report extenuating circumstances to their LTS Hub not later than 10 working days prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board ECP.

5.3.5 Date of Pre-Board ECP meetings will be publicised to students.

5.3.6 ECPs shall determine the severity of impact and make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners on how the impact of the extenuating circumstances should be accommodated.

5.3.7 Recommendations may include:

- Award of a higher classification;
- Permission to progress within the constraints of the relevant regulations for the award;
- Where progression requirements have not been met, permission recommend to retake the year or a part of the

- year, with or without [an interruption in a period of study](#) Assessment, reassessment or further assessment;
- For students in Stage 0 or Stage 1, provisional progression pending the successful outcome of the delayed assessment. This adjustment is available only where a student has failed only one module and has approval for a ~~delayed sit further attempt for in~~ the failed item(s). Assessment must be completed by the deadline set annually by LTS;
  - That a student be transferred to an alternative course
- 5.3.8 The actual adjustment shall be determined by the Board of Examiners.
- 5.3.9 When making decisions regarding appropriate adjustments, the Board of Examiners shall demonstrate that it has fully considered the recommendations of the Pre-Board ECP.
- 5.3.10 Adjustments must comply with PSRB requirements ([e.g.](#) maximum length of registration), where applicable.

Updated 22 June 2016 ([LTC Minute.....](#))



## Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) for Taught Programmes 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 not formally part of the University Regulations but 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 The Extenuating Circumstances Regulation became effective from the start of the 2013-14 academic year and applied to all students enrolled on modules starting on or after 23 September 2013.~~
- ~~1.4 Revisions to the Extenuating Circumstances Regulation were approved for introduction in 2014-15 and apply to all students registering for study in this and subsequent academic years. Please see changes below.~~
- ~~1.5.3~~ Students who have detailed queries regarding any aspect of the Extenuating Circumstances Regulations should contact their Hub where staff will direct the query to the most appropriate office within the University.
- ~~1.6.1.4~~ Numerical references in the guidance below refer to the relevant section of the Extenuating Circumstances Regulation.
- ~~1.7.1.5~~ '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.
- ~~1.8.1.6~~ For all extended deadlines, the submission time will remain as no later than 15:00 on the new assignment deadline.

### 2 Key elements of the policy~~Important Changes:~~

- ~~2.1~~ Students are entitled to self-certify on one occasion per academic semester or term for year for an automatic extension to a submission deadline
- ~~2.2~~ Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year.
- ~~2.4.2.3~~ If there are multiple submission deadlines that fall on or within the five working day self-certification period the work for these submissions are covered by the five working days of the self-certification period.
- ~~2.2.2.4~~ Consideration of extension requests and Delayed Assessments/Reassessments (DA/Rs) will be undertaken by Extenuating Circumstances Panels (ECPs), or by LTS staff acting on behalf of ECPs.
- ~~2.3.2.5~~ Pre-Board ECP dates will be published in advance on the LTS website.

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~~2.4~~ Staff and students should note that the EC regulation allows for students to be granted a [Delayed Assessment or Reassessment #R](#) for assessments that have been passed but where extenuating circumstances have impacted on the assessment attempt.

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#### ~~2.52.6~~

#### ~~Changes Effective from September 2014:~~

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~~2.6~~ Students are entitled to self-certify on one occasion per academic year for an automatic extension to a submission deadline, rather than on one occasion per semester or term

~~2.7~~ Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year

~~2.7~~ Automatic extensions are approved for five working days, rather than seven, and requests for extensions longer than five working days must be supported by acceptable evidence.

~~2.8~~ LTS Co-ordinators may approve extension requests where they are supported by medical evidence covering the period, including retrospective requests

### **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, Course Test, OSCE, OSPE 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, which may include those outlined in 5.3.7.
- 3.5** Reported extenuating circumstances and resulting adjustments will be provided to the Pre Exam Board 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 [Learning and Teaching Service \(LTS\)](#) Hub which supports the programme on which they are registered, even if the module is owned by a different School. 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 (4.11).
- 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 on their e-vision account.
- 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 (5.1.3).
- 4.64.7 Any piece of work which falls due in the period covered by the self-certified extension will have the deferred submission deadline applied (5.1.2). For example, a student has a self-certified extension on assignment A with an original due date of 15 March and a revised due date of 20 March. Consequently, assignment B with an original due date of 18 March would now also have a due date of 20 March.
- 4.74.8 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.
- 4.84.9 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.
- 4.94.10 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.
- 4.104.11 Students should retain electronic copies of all versions submitted.
- 4.114.12 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.
- 4.124.13 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 LTS Co-ordinator or ECP 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 LTS Hub, 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 Pre-Board ECP but prior to the meeting of the Board of Examiners, this shall be referred to the Chair of the Pre-board ECP who will take a decision as to whether the late report can be accepted and considered by the Pre-Board (which can meet virtually, if necessary) in time for reporting any recommendations to the Board of Examiners.
- 5.4** Where extenuating circumstances are reported too late to be considered by the Pre-Board, 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** Pre-Board ECP dates will be published on the LTS website.
- 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.

[Updated 20160622 LTC](#)

## 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