

# **Extenuating Circumstances (Research Programme Assessment)**

## **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 which relate to Research Degree Programmes shall be managed, where those extenuating circumstances relate to assessment components managed by a Board of Examiners or by a course team on behalf of the Board of Examiners.

Research degrees in this category are currently the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (ClinPsyD), the Doctor of Education (EdD, MEd), the Professional Doctorate (ProfD) and the Doctorate in Educational Psychology (EdPsyD). All other extenuating circumstances (i.e. affecting the student's general registration and/or thesis element) should be handled via the postgraduate research student concessions process.

## **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 ensuring 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 for assessment components managed by or on behalf of a Board of Examiners 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);

#### **Decisions about progression and/or final classification**

4.2 There shall be an Extenuating Circumstances Panel (ECP) for each Board of Examiners covering research degree programmes in the School of Study.

4.3 Each ECP shall consist of a pool of 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 the relevant 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 the PGR Service.
- 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 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 Student Support Service.
- 4.14 Where a student reports circumstances as permitted under 4.13 above, the Student Support Service shall either:

Confirm the confidential nature of the circumstance and provide the ECP with a statement of its severity. The substantive detail of the circumstances shall remain confidential to the Student Support Service.

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 the PGR Service, in accordance with 4.9-4.11 above.

## **5 Consideration of Extenuating Circumstances**

### **5.1 Extension Requests (deadline assessments)**

- 5.1.1 Extensions of 7 working days shall be approved automatically on receipt of an Extenuating Circumstances Report Form 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.
- 5.1.2 The restriction to one occasion in each academic year may include a single request relating to a single extension period of 7 working days but applying to more than one item of assessment, where a student has multiple coincident submission deadlines.
- 5.1.3 Students may only use self-certification in support of the first extension request in any academic year. Where students request more than one extension within an academic year, any additional applications must be supported by acceptable evidence.

- 5.1.4 Additional applications that meet the ARC criteria may be approved by the member of PGR Service staff acting as Secretary to the Board of Examiners.
- 5.1.5 Additional applications that cannot be mapped to the ARC criteria or do not have clear evidence shall be considered by the relevant EC Panel.
- 5.1.6 ECPs shall reach a decision and advise the student of the outcome, normally within 3 working days of the request being received by the PGR Service. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend this deadline and the student shall be advised in writing where this is the case.
- 5.1.7 Where an extension will impact on the dates of period of study/registration or the order in which placements are taken, the ECP may need to additionally recommend that the student applies for a concession and follows the postgraduate research student concessions process.

## **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 or Delayed Reassessment cancels the assessment that it replaces. A Further Reassessment provides an additional opportunity without cancelling the original reassessment attempt.
- 5.2.4 Where an application for a DA/R is approved, the student may choose whether or not to take the new assessment and replace their existing mark, which shall be voided.
- 5.2.5 Where a student attends an event or submits a new assessment, the recorded mark shall be the mark received for the new assessment and not the better of the 2 marks achieved.

5.2.6 A DA/R may be considered where:

- the student failed to attend;
- the student attended the assessment but believes that they 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.

5.2.7 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.

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

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 by the PGR Service.

5.2.10 The Chair of the ECP may approve a later deadline for the provision of supporting evidence.

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.

5.2.12 DA/R requests shall be considered by the member of PGR Service staff acting as Secretary to the Board of Examiners 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.

5.2.14 Where an extension will impact on the dates of period of study/registration or the order in which placements are taken, the ECP may need to additionally recommend that the student applies for a concession and follows the postgraduate research student concessions process.

### **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 the PGR Service not later than 10 working days prior to the meeting of the Pre-Board ECP.
- 5.3.5 Dates 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 to retake the year or a part of the year, with or without a period of interruption;
  - Assessment, reassessment or further assessment;
  - That a student applies for a concession following the postgraduate research student concessions process;
  - 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.