

## APPENDIX C

### Regulations governing student claims of extenuating circumstances affecting formal assessment/examination with effect from 1 September 2005

- (a) **Statement of University Principles**
- (b) **Definition and nature of extenuating circumstances**
- (c) **Evidence in support of claims of extenuating circumstances**
- (d) **Procedures for dealing with claims of extenuating circumstances**

#### 1. **STATEMENT OF UNIVERSITY PRINCIPLES**

This statement replaces all earlier statements of policy and procedure on extenuating circumstances.

- 1.1 The fundamental principle underlying the work of the University of Greenwich is that the Degrees, Diplomas, Certificates and other academic awards conferred by the University should be consistent and comparable in standard with awards granted and conferred throughout higher education in the United Kingdom. The University has a duty to maintain the standard of its awards, so that employers, professional bodies, other educational institutions and outside agencies can have confidence in the level of achievement that those awards represent.
- 1.2 At the same time the University has a duty to each individual student to ensure that assessments are conducted fairly, and that each student has the opportunity to demonstrate her/his true level of academic performance.
- 1.3 Recognising that students may sometimes suffer serious illness or other problems which are outside their control and which may prevent them from showing their real level of performance, the University has a system whereby students who have been affected by such problems can put forward extenuating claims for consideration.
- 1.4 **It is important that students understand what kinds of circumstances could be treated as extenuating circumstances, and that problems arising from their own negligence or inability to organise their time, will not be considered.**
- 1.5 Most students experience a certain amount of stress at periods of formal assessment. It is expected that individuals studying in higher education will develop the ability to deal with this and to produce satisfactory work whilst meeting deadlines. "Examination stress" or stress in a practice placement, shall not in and of itself be considered as an extenuating circumstance.

- 1.6 Students should also know that even if their extenuating circumstances are deemed acceptable and relevant to the assessment they have failed, or not submitted, **this does not excuse them from completing formal assessment.** They will still have to demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes in order to pass that stage of their programme or qualify for the final award at a point in time when the extenuating circumstances no longer affect the student's performance. Nor will an extenuating circumstances claim necessarily affect the academic judgement of Progression and Award Boards.
- 1.7 Claims for extenuating circumstances should be made at the time of the unforeseen circumstances and **not retrospectively.**
- 1.8 All work that is handed in after the official submission deadline, established by the course co-ordinator, will be graded as 0%, unless accompanied by an extenuating circumstances form, which is subsequently accepted as valid (see section 5: Extenuation Panel).
- 1.9 Claims relating to the submission of coursework/continuous assessment should be made **before the assessment is due.** This includes work affected by extenuation which is handed in by submission deadlines AND also work submitted within 10 working days of submission deadline.
- 1.10 Claims relating to examinations. If a student is sick on the day of an examination then the student must phone in to a relevant officer (i.e. via the Exams Officer in the School Office) for approval **before** the examination takes place. This approval will be subject to submission to the School as soon as possible of written evidence from a medical practitioner. It is possible for a student to opt to submit for assessment by the original date, even if extenuation has been approved. However, if the assessment is passed then the grade will stand. The approved extenuation will only be applied if a course has been failed.
- 1.11 Claims relating to multiple assessments/examinations affected, which can be covered by the same extenuating circumstance should be detailed on a single pro-forma.
- 1.12 Schools shall not have separate policies relating to extensions and differing penalties for late submission of work.

## **2. DEFINITION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 2.1 Extenuating circumstances are normally defined as circumstances which are unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond a student's control, and which may have affected his/her academic performance.
- 2.2 A student might wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed materially or significantly to poor performance in any

formally assessed work, absence from examination or other assessment event, or failure in examination or other assessed work. Prior consultation with the Programme Leader or Personal Tutor is advisable. A student might wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed to a failure to submit work within published deadlines.

- 2.3 It is the responsibility of any students with a **long-term condition or problem** which may affect her/his study and assessment, to seek advice as early as possible and use the support services available through the University<sup>\*</sup>, to ensure that they can study and undergo formal assessment in the way which meets their special needs but still allows them to demonstrate their real academic ability. (See Examination and Assessment Regulations for Students with Disabilities, Dyslexia and Long-term Medical Conditions). Advice and help are readily available through the Students' Union and Student Centre. Prior consultation with the Programme Leader or Personal Tutor is also advisable.
- 2.4 When submitting claims for extenuation a student will need to demonstrate that the circumstances claimed had affected her/him **at the time** of a formal assessment or in **the period immediately leading up** to an assessment. A long term condition or problem will not be treated as extenuating circumstances in relation to failure in assessment, unless it can be shown that the condition or problem was exacerbated by circumstances occurring during or close to the assessment period.
- 2.5 Valid extenuating circumstances would normally fall into the categories:
- a) Illness or serious accident at the time of an assessment or in the period leading up to a formal assessment;
  - b) Severe emotional or mental stress at the time of an assessment or immediately before an assessment, for example through bereavement, social, matrimonial or family problems, experience of assault, robbery or other traumatic event, eviction/homelessness in unavoidable circumstances, unavoidable involvement in legal proceedings;
  - c) Other factors totally outside the student's control; e.g. for part time students, unforeseen and essential work commitments; for students undertaking practice-based assignments, unforeseen decisions taken by the company or practice which prevent them from completing their assignment; (in both these circumstances a letter from the employer **must** be supplied). IT problems which are the responsibility of the University such as total system failure over a prolonged period.

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<sup>\*</sup> University students studying at Partner organisations should use the support services available in situ.

- 2.6 It is expected that students will take reasonable steps to avoid foreseeable problems, such as loss of computer records (by backing up work regularly) or transport disruption (by planning alternative routes where possible)

### 3. **EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF CLAIMS OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 3.1 Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the University's pro forma and must be supported by relevant objective evidence. Evidence must be in the form of an original document (not a photocopy) written and signed by an appropriate third party, giving details of the circumstances with dates and if possible stating how the student's assessment has been affected. The third party should be a person who knows the student in a professional capacity and can give a first-hand account of the circumstances. Letters from family members are not normally acceptable, nor from fellow students (unless such corroboration is the only relevant evidence). **Submissions of extenuating circumstances will not be valid without independent evidence. Extenuation Panels will deem claims to be invalid or request evidence before further consideration.**
- 3.2 It is recognised that the submission of such evidence may be related to sensitive and distressing circumstances. Students seeking guidance can do so through Student Centre or through the Students' Union Advice Service. (Students in Partner organisations should seek guidance through their own Student Centre or counselling departments) and will be given as much assistance as possible. **Confidentiality will be preserved.** If the particular circumstances are so severe that the student would not want the information to be seen by anyone, then the Counsellor can write to the Chair of the Progression and Award Board direct on behalf of the student outlining the circumstances and their findings following consultation over a period of time. The Counsellor will need to see any documentary evidence supplied by the student in order to be able to confirm that the facts have been verified.
- 3.3 Acceptable evidence to be submitted with a extenuation claim would include:
- a medical certificate issued **at the time of the illness**, specifying the nature of the illness and the dates affected. To be accepted, the medical certificate must be specific and confirm that this is the doctor's own diagnosis. It is not sufficient for the doctor to write a letter stating that the student saw her/him and claimed to be suffering from stress etc;
  - a letter from an independent counsellor or psychiatrist;

- a letter from the Students Services Counselling Service or the Students' Union Advice Service;
- a written statement from the student's personal tutor,
- a solicitor's letter indicating the nature and dates of legal proceedings; summons to attend court; report from a police officer;
- letter from a transport official confirming serious and unforeseen disruption to transport;
- death certificate (e.g. of a close relative).

3.4 **Claims of extenuating circumstances without independent evidence will not be considered unless the circumstances are exceptional.**

#### 4. **PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

- 4.1 Procedures, including the role of an invigilator, to be followed if a student falls ill during an examination are detailed in the Assessment Information for Candidates ([www.gre.ac.uk/students/affairs/rse/infocand](http://www.gre.ac.uk/students/affairs/rse/infocand)).
- 4.2 Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the University's pro forma, with independent evidence as described above. Copies can be obtained from Student Centres and the Students Union. For receipt purposes the student number and programme, and date of submission should be recorded on an envelope **and marked 'extenuating circumstances'**.
- 4.3 Claims must be handed in or sent by Recorded Delivery to the appropriate **Student Centre**. A receipt will be issued. Where claims are submitted by Recorded Delivery a stamped self-addressed envelope must be provided so that a receipt can be issued. No complaint relating to extenuating circumstances can be considered without a receipt.
- 4.4 For students studying University awards at Partner organisations, extenuating circumstances forms are available from their Programme Leader. **The Programme Leader will ensure that completed documentation is returned to the appropriate University Student Centre. Partner organisation students will be advised of the correct procedure by the Programme Leader.**

## 5. EXTENUATION PANELS

- 5.1 An Extenuation Panel has delegated authority from a Progression and Award Board to consider all claims relating to extenuating circumstances. The composition of an Extenuation Panel will consist of the School Director of Learning and Quality or nominee, School Quality Officer and additional membership determined by School Board. Confidentiality will be preserved by the membership of Extenuation Panels.
- 5.2 Extenuation Panels will meet on a regular basis (number of occasions to be determined by individual Schools with reference to key dates for coursework submissions and examinations).
- 5.3 An Extenuation Panel will consider all claims for extenuating circumstances and communicate the outcome of such to the Progression and Award Board and individual students. A record of its decisions will be kept by the School Quality Officer.
- 5.4 Action available to the Extenuation Panel will be the acceptance or rejection of claims (or parts thereof) or a request to the student for further information. Whilst indicating the severity and scale of extenuation to Progression and Award Boards **on no account will grades be amended**. Students will be informed of the outcomes of Extenuation Panels.
- 5.5 The records of the Extenuation Panel will be taken into consideration by the Progression and Award Board when reaching a decision for individual candidates.

# EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES FORM

**1. Your details. It will help with the consideration of your claim if all relevant sections are completed in full. Please print clearly**

Full Name			
Contact Address, email and telephone number.			
Banner ID			
Programme			
School / Partner			
Stage		Mode: FT/PT/DL/Other	

**2. Formal Assessments affected**

*Please give the date, the title and Banner code of the course (four letters followed by four figures concerned and the type of assessment (e.g.E = examination,C= coursework, lab unit)*

Coursework deadline/date of examination	Date assessment submitted. Insert NS if coursework not submitted or if absent from exam	Course Title	Course Code	Type of assessment

**3. Summary of details of the extenuating circumstances**

*Please tick the box(es) that most accurately summarise your circumstances)*

<input type="checkbox"/> Accident	<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Work (part-time and placement students)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Assault	<input type="checkbox"/> Jury Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Bereavement	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Duration of illness/circumstances	
From:	To:

**4. Documentary evidence:** *Please tick the box(es) to show what form of evidence you have submitted with this form. Claims submitted without evidence will NOT be considered by Extenuation Panels*

<input type="checkbox"/> Doctor's certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Police Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Death Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> Employer Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Counsellor's Letter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other ( <i>please specify</i> )	

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**5. University staff informed** (*with whom you have discussed your circumstances*)

Name	School or Department

**6. Details of the extenuating circumstances**

*Please describe briefly the circumstances which have adversely affected your assessment. If you are consulting a doctor or counsellor, or other professional adviser, a letter from that person can replace this statement if you prefer.*

**7. Other information** *Please give any other information that you think may be relevant***8. University Data Protection Policy**

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires the University to observe new legal provisions designed to safeguard both data subjects' rights (students) and the data relating to them. The Act requires that we inform you of what personal data is acquired and the purposes for which it is acquired. By signing this form you will be giving the University permission to collect, hold and process additional personal data relating to you for evaluation of your extenuating circumstances.

Signing this declaration does not compromise any rights you enjoy under the Data Protection Act 1998 nor any other legislation relating to personal privacy and data storage. Should the University need to collect and process additional sensitive data your explicit consent will be sought. Further information can be obtained from the University's Data Protection Policy statement and the Data Protection Code of Practice.

**Declaration to be signed by student**

I have read and understood the statement and agree to the University collecting, holding and processing my personal data for the purposes described. I declare that the information given in this extenuating circumstances form and the accompanying papers is that I would be willing, if required, to answer further questions related to it.

Signed.....

**THIS FORM SHOULD BE SENT TO BE SENT RECORDED DELIVERY OR  
HANDED IN TO THE STUDENT CENTRE ON THE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS AT  
WHICH YOU STUDY**

**Student Centres are located at:**

**AVERY HILL CAMPUS**

Room A004  
Southwood House  
Avery Hill Road  
Eltham  
London SE9 2PQ  
Tel: 020 8331 8444

**GREENWICH CAMPUS**

Room 40  
Queen Mary Court  
Park Row  
Greenwich SE10 9LS  
Tel: 020 8331 9111

**MEDWAY CAMPUS**

Blake Building  
Central Avenue  
Chatham Maritime  
Kent  
ME4 4TB  
Tel: 020 8331 8337  
Tel: 020 8331 9794

# STUDENT GUIDANCE

## WHAT IS EXTENUATION?

Extenuating Circumstances are circumstances which

- impair your performance in assessment or reassessment, or
- prevent you from attending for assessment or reassessment, or
- prevent you from submitting assessed or reassessed work by the scheduled date

Such circumstances **rarely occur** and would normally be

- **unforeseeable** - in that you could have no prior knowledge of the event concerned, and
- **unpreventable** - in that you could do nothing reasonably in your power to prevent such an event, and
- expected to have a **serious impact** on performance

***Students are expected to make reasonable plans to take into account circumstances even those which, on occasion, may have been unforeseeable and unpreventable.***

For example, students commonly taking a route to the campus which experiences severe traffic delays would be expected to leave earlier or plan to take an alternative route on the morning of an examination. Another example would be a carer for a dependent who on occasion has not attended college because the dependent developed a minor illness. The student would have been expected to make contingency plans for alternative care just in case this happened on the day of an examination. The onus is on students to manage their life so that these types of occurrences can be handled if they arise.

### ***What is meant by a serious impact on performance?***

Many things may have an impact on performance – a poor night's sleep, a minor illness (such as a cough or cold), a minor injury, financial worries etc. These will often impact on performance but would **not be expected to have a serious impact** and so would **not** be acceptable as extenuating circumstances

## WHAT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE EXTENUATION?

- *minor illnesses - even if covered by medical certificates.* As stated above these may have some impact but not a serious impact and so would not be regarded as extenuating circumstances.
- *computer failure of your equipment or storage media.* Students are expected to take proper precautions and make back up copies of data which are accessible (not in a friends house which becomes inaccessible). There are always other computers to work on.
- *inadequate planning, organisation or time management.* **This includes the late submission of coursework – late is late whether it is by 1 minute, 1 hour or one day. All work that is handed in after the official submission deadline, established by the course co-ordinator, will be graded as 0%, unless exceptional circumstances apply and extenuation submitted is deemed valid.**
- *computer failure of University equipment or storage media (where failure is less than a continuous 24 hours).* Network failures do happen and work should be planned to be finished before 'the last minute'. For instance students relying on finishing work within 24 hours of a deadline (e.g. printing your work off) are opening yourself up to this risk. This could have prevented this by better planning.
- *transport problems.* Students need to plan for this possibility.
- *moving house.* This is predictable.
- *holidays.* This is predictable.
- *Wedding preparations*
- *Sporting commitments* – exceptions might be made if a student was representing their country/University.
- *misreading of assessment timetables.*
- *family, work, social, financial or other general problems.* This is a large list but covers the sorts of things normally dealt with in everyday life and would not be regarded as extenuating circumstances.
- *Employment commitments* limiting time available for study (*although greater flexibility may be applicable to part-time students in full-time employment*)
- *Pressure of other academic work* e.g. other coursework due around the same time

**N.B. These examples are not definitive, and are intended only as a guide.**