

HE Student Extenuating Circumstances Policy (Non-Partner College Qualifications)

Author	Deputy Executive Principal – Curriculum and Strategy
Date	October 2022
Person Responsible	HE Officer
Approval/ review body	SMT
Frequency of Review*	24 months

** Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

Review History:		
Date of review	Reviewed by	Reason for review
August 2015	HE Officer	College name and logo change
June 2017	AP SCC	Timely Review and changes in management structure
June 2019	AP Performance & Excellence	Scheduled review
August 2022	DEP – Curriculum and Strategy	Scheduled review

Contents

1. Overview of Extenuating Circumstances	2
2. Definition of Extenuating Circumstances	3
3. Evidence Required.....	4
4. Procedure for Applying for Extenuating Circumstances.....	5
5. Extenuation Panels	5
Extenuating Circumstances Form	6

1. Overview and Scope of Extenuating Circumstances

North Kent College ("the College") is a multi-sited educational institution, which includes Hadlow College which offers Higher Education programmes directly such as Pearson BTEC Highers, and through partner Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) such as franchised programmes with University of Greenwich and Canterbury Christ Church University. This policy applies to those programmes offered by the College through direct Higher Education funding. For franchised/partnership programmes, the related policies of the awarding HEI's will apply.

Deadlines for assessment are an important part of Pearson BTEC Highers and other HE programmes awarded by external organisations. It is important that students are assessed fairly and consistently and that students are not advantaged by having additional time to complete assignments. Therefore, tutors have the right to refuse work that is late for assessment. However, the college recognises 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 and, therefore, has a system whereby students who have been affected by such problems can put forward extenuating claims for consideration.

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 work-based placement shall not in itself be considered as an extenuating circumstance.

Students should also know that even if their extenuating circumstances are deemed acceptable and relevant to the assessment they have not completed, this does not excuse them from completing that item of assessment. They will still at some stage have to demonstrate that they have achieved the required learning outcomes to pass that stage of their programme. Nor will a "extenuating circumstances" claim necessarily affect the academic judgement of the Assessment Board.

Claims for extenuating circumstances must be made at the time of the unforeseen circumstances and not retrospectively.

All work that is handed in after the official submission deadline will not initially be marked. If an extenuating circumstances claim is then accepted, the assignment will be marked, and grades will not be penalised. If extenuating circumstances are rejected, a decision will be made as to whether the assignment will be marked. If it is marked, the assessor must *not* downgrade work to a pass level unless the assessment and grade descriptors require evidence of the following:

- 1.1 meeting agreed timelines;
- 1.2 the ability to plan/organise time effectively; and

- 1.3 the ability to work to industrial/commercial practices that include implicit timelines.

2. Definition of Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are normally defined as circumstances which are unexpected, significantly disruptive and beyond a student's control, and which may have affected their academic performance.

A student might wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed to poor performance in any formally assessed work, absence from examination or other assessment event. A student might also wish to claim that extenuating circumstances have contributed to a failure to submit work within published deadlines.

It is the responsibility of any student 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 college, 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. Prior consultation with the Programme Leader is also advisable.

When submitting claims for extenuating circumstances, a student will need to demonstrate that the circumstances claimed had affected them 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.

Valid extenuating circumstances would normally fall into the following categories:

- 2.1 illness or serious accident at the time of an assessment or in the period leading up to a formal assessment;
- 2.2 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;
- 2.3 Other factors totally outside the student's control; e.g. 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 College such as total system failure over a prolonged period.

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 Required

Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted on the College'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 (e.g. doctor) 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, in which case the extenuation panel may deem claims to be invalid or request evidence before further consideration.**

It is recognised that the submission of such evidence may be related to sensitive and distressing circumstances. Students seeking guidance can do so through a NKC counsellor and will be given as much assistance as possible. **Confidentiality will be preserved.** If the circumstances are so severe that the student would not want the information to be seen by anyone, then the Counsellor can write to the relevant Vice Principal/Deputy Principle for the Division under which the curriculum is delivered, directly on behalf of the student, outlining the circumstances and their findings following consultation over 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.

Acceptable evidence to be submitted with an extenuation claim would include:

- 3.1 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;
- 3.2 a letter from an independent counsellor or psychiatrist;
- 3.3 a letter from a college counsellor;
- 3.4 a written statement from the student's programme leader,
- 3.5 a solicitor's letter indicating the nature and dates of legal proceedings; summons to attend court; report from a police officer;

- 3.6 letter from a transport official confirming serious and unforeseen disruption to transport; or
- 3.7 copy of death certificate (e.g. of a close relative).

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

4. Procedure for Applying for Extenuating Circumstances

Claims of extenuating circumstances must be submitted using the College's Extenuating Circumstances pro forma, with independent evidence as described above. Copies of this can be obtained from the Programme Leader, the HE Officer or through the HE Community Moodle Site.

For receipt purposes, the student ID and programme and date of submission should be recorded on an envelope **and marked 'extenuating circumstances'**.

Claims must be handed in or sent by recorded delivery to the relevant curriculum administrator or programme team leader. 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.

5. Extenuation Panels

An extenuation panel will consider the extenuation claim. The panel will commonly consist of the Programme Leader, Head of Curriculum and where required, the Assistant Principal. Confidentiality will be preserved by the membership of Extenuation Panels. Extenuation Panels will meet ad-hoc when required.

An Extenuation Panel will consider all claims for extenuating circumstances and communicate the outcome of such to the individual student and the Assessment Board panel. A record of its decisions will be kept by the Programme Leader.

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 Assessment Board **on no account will grades be amended.**

Extenuating Circumstances Form (Non-Partner College Qualifications)

1. Your details

Full Name			
Contact Address			
Telephone Number			
Email			
Student ID			
Programme			
Year of Study		Mode:	

2. Formal Assessments which may have been affected

Please give the date, the title and code of the units concerned and the type of assessment (e.g. examination, coursework, presentation).

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

3. Summary of details of the extenuating circumstances

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

Accident	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Work (part-time and placement students)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assault	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jury Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	Confidential	<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 Exenuation Panel*

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

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

Name:

Department:

6. Details of the extenuating circumstances

Please describe briefly the circumstances which may have affected your performance in assessment, or ability to meet the required deadline. If you are consulting a doctor or counsellor, or other professional adviser, a letter from that person can replace this statement if you would prefer.

7. Other information *Please give any other information that you think may be relevant.*

8. Statement from Programme Leader (if applicable)

Declaration to be signed by student

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

Signed:

Date: