

Regent College London

Extenuating Circumstances

Requests for Extensions and Deferral of

Higher National Assessments

A Guide for Students

1 Principles

If extenuating circumstances have a significant effect on your ability to complete an assessment task, you may be provided with an extension, deferral or additional opportunity to complete the task, without penalty, provided that you follow the procedures below.

If you submit coursework (including a project or dissertation), or attempt an examination, after submitting a claim for an extension for that submission, the request for the extension will be disregarded, and your work will be marked in the usual way.

A claim for an extension for coursework or deferral of an examination or coursework made after the date of the deadline or after the date of the examination will not normally be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances would such a claim be considered.

If you are studying on one of Regent College's University partnerships, you should communicate with your Director of Studies and they will advise you in accordance with the appropriate University policies and procedures.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Extenuating circumstances** are genuine circumstances, beyond your control or ability to foresee, and which seriously impair your ability to undertake and complete an assessment task (coursework, examination, presentation, project/dissertation, etc.). Extenuating circumstances may also apply to explaining absence from scheduled teaching and learning activities.

Extenuating circumstances do not excuse you from completing the assessment task. You still have to demonstrate that you can achieve the required learning outcomes to pass each unit/module and meet the course/programme requirements for progression or award. This is done when extenuating circumstances no longer affect your performance.

Separate procedures apply to cases where coursework or an examination is affected by exceptional circumstances for all students in your class group, cohort, etc. These may include, for example, disruption in an examination room or prolonged absence of a lecturer without sufficient cover being provided. Such events are managed by the Unit Leader, Programme Leader, Academic Dean or Principal, as appropriate.

- 2.2 An **extension** is defined as permission to hand in a piece of assessed work after the published deadline for submitting the work, without incurring a penalty.

An extension to a coursework/project/dissertation deadline may be granted after the published deadline to a new deadline specified by the Cohort Leader or Programme Leader, as appropriate.

The Cohort Leader or Programme Leader, as appropriate, assesses requests for extensions or deferral using the Extenuating Circumstance Form (ECF) according to the extenuating circumstances guidelines. Cohort leaders and Programme Leaders are the sole authorities for granting an extension or deferral to coursework deadlines.

If your circumstances are such that you feel that despite being granted an extension to a deadline your performance will be seriously impaired, you may formally apply for a deferral of the coursework assessment.

Only the Programme Leader can grant a deferral of coursework.

- 2.3 A **deferral** is defined as permission to delay a particular assessment task for longer than the published re-submission deadline so making it impossible for your grades/marks to be considered at the next meeting of the Assessment Board. Normally, submission of deferred work would be in the following term/semester. The final project/dissertation may be deferred as long as it is judged that no advantage, compared to other students, is gained by the student.

3 Extensions and Deferrals

If, due to extenuating circumstances, you consider yourself unable to meet an assessment deadline or attempt an assessment, you may submit a request for:

- An extension to a coursework deadline, or
- A deferred attempt at the assessment (coursework or examination), to take place at an appropriate time after the meeting of the appropriate Assessment Board and in the following term/semester.

You should consult your Unit Leader or Cohort Leader as soon as extenuating circumstances become apparent. Your Unit Leader or Cohort Leader will be able to advise you on the most appropriate course of action. It would also be a good idea to talk to a Student Support Officer about matters that are affecting your studies and completion of assessed work so that appropriate advice and support can be provided.

If you request a deferral of assessment, and that deferral is granted, you will be required to retake the assessment at the next opportunity. You should be aware that you may be required to take a break from your studies in order to take the assessment when the unit(s)/module(s) are next offered at the College.

If you are unable to submit coursework by the specified date because of extenuating circumstances you should contact your Unit Leader or Cohort Leader **before** the deadline date to request an extension, and obtain an Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) from the College Reception, the VLE (HELP) or the College's website.

A claim for an extension for coursework or deferral of an examination or coursework made after the date of the deadline or after the date of the examination will not normally be considered. Only in exceptional circumstances would such a claim be considered.

All applications for an extension must be submitted in writing using the Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF). Supporting third-party evidence must be provided at the time of making the request for a coursework extension.

Requests must be submitted before the coursework deadline. Requests will only be considered after the coursework deadline in exceptional circumstances.

On the Extenuating Circumstances Form you are asked to indicate how long an extension you think you will need, however, the College is not bound to accept your estimate of the extra time required.

You must submit the application form to your Cohort Leader for consideration. Your Cohort Leader or Programme Leader may grant an extension provided your mitigating circumstances are backed up by independent evidence.

If the request for an extension is approved you will be sent a new submission deadline by email. Provided you hand in your coursework (via Turnitin unless explicitly stated otherwise), on or before the extension submission deadline, you will not incur any penalty.

4 Making a Request for Deferral of an Assessment

If extenuating circumstances prevent you from attending a formal examination, or you feel that your performance would be so seriously impaired that you decide not to attend, you may submit a request for deferral of assessment for the affected examination(s). You may also request a deferral of coursework (including the final project/dissertation) if you feel that a short extension (normally up to three weeks) of the deadline would be insufficient.

If you want to request a deferral of coursework assessments or of an examination you should discuss the matter with your Cohort Leader or Programme Leader, so that extenuating circumstances and consequences of deferral can be fully considered.

All applications for deferral must be made in writing, **before** the due date of the assessment task. This must be done using the **Extenuating Circumstances Form** (ECF). In exceptional circumstances, such as an accident or personal injury, you may call your Cohort Leader or Programme Leader on the day of the submission/examination if you are prevented from submitting/attending. In such cases a form will be completed on your behalf but you will need to provide independent evidence as soon as possible after the incident. If you do not provide independent evidence you will be judged to have missed the assessment deadline and this will be deemed as non-submission.

Requests for deferral should always be made as close as possible to the time of your extenuating circumstances and before the date of an examination or due date of the coursework. Applications for deferral will not be accepted after the coursework deadline or date of the examination, except where you can show that circumstances beyond your control, and independently evidenced, prevented you from contacting the College in this period. Where more than one assessment is affected the application for deferral must be made before the first assessment task.

Your application for deferral of an assessment task must clearly state when your circumstances occurred and which assessments are affected. The application form asks you to describe your extenuating circumstances and how they have or would impair your performance in the assessment task. You must include all relevant facts at the time of application (see Section 6 below).

Supporting third party, independent evidence must be attached to the Extenuating Circumstances Form (see Section 7 below). If your extenuating circumstances are of an exceptionally sensitive or personal nature, you may request that only the Programme Leader consider your request in a closed interview. In such cases the Programme Leader will record the nature of your extenuating circumstances on the Extenuating Circumstances Form to document the reasons for extension.

4.1 Acceptance of Deferral

If your application for deferral is accepted this will be confirmed to you by email. You will be notified of the assessment tasks that have been deferred and the date(s) by which you must attempt the assessment(s) again.

4.2 Refusal of Deferral

If your application for a deferral is refused this will also be confirmed to you by email. You must attempt the assessment by the published deadline otherwise a non-submission will be recorded.

If extenuating circumstances affect a further assessment opportunity, you must make another application for deferral for the period concerned. This could simply confirm that your earlier circumstances have continued, but it must be accompanied by new third-party evidence covering the new period.

5 How much information do I need to provide?

You must include all relevant facts. Your application for extension or deferral may be rejected if you fail to complete the details concerning the unit(s)/module(s) and assessed component(s) for which you are requesting an extension or deferral.

You must ensure that you provide the specific submission date and/or examination date and clearly identify the assessment or examination. You must state the date from which the extenuating circumstances affected your studies, and the date that you were/will be able to resume your normal pattern of studies. These dates must correspond with any information provided in your third-party evidence. You must also make sure that you explain the impact that these circumstances have had on your performance.

6 What evidence do I need to provide?

Requests for an extension or a deferral can only be made through submission of a properly completed Extenuating Circumstances Form. The College will not consider any request for coursework extension or deferral by any other means.

Requests for extensions or deferral must be accompanied by supporting evidence, normally from an independent third party. You are advised to keep a copy of any evidence you submit to the College. It is appreciated that in some cases it is difficult to produce independent, supporting evidence, however lack of third-party evidence will weaken your application.

If you miss an examination due to illness, or are affected by illness during your examination, you must seek medical attention on the day, and you must submit documentary evidence. The evidence must relate to the time of the illness and must make it clear that you were medically unfit to take/complete the examination. Retrospective medical certificates and doctor's notes stating that you claim to have been unwell may not be accepted. Medical evidence must bear the GP's stamp, and/or be on appropriate letter-headed paper.

Please note that some doctors will charge a fee for providing you with medical certification. The College is not liable to pay this fee on your behalf.

Examples of other third-party evidence that might be acceptable in support of non-medical circumstances may include:

- A letter from family concerning, for example, bereavement accompanied by a copy of the death certificate, if possible.
- A letter from someone who has been providing non-medical support, such as a counsellor.

If you knowingly submit false or forged evidence, you will render yourself liable to disciplinary proceedings, which can include de-registration from your course.

7 Valid and invalid extenuating circumstances

7.1 Examples of extenuating circumstances that might be considered valid include the following:

- Hospital, including operations
- Long-standing health problems
- Personal or psychological problems for which the student is undergoing counselling or has been referred to other qualified practitioners
- Chronic illness
- Childbirth (including a spouse/partner in labour)
- Bereavement causing significant impact/effect
- Major accident or injury, acute ailments or conditions which coincide with an assessment deadline, examination date, or are sufficiently long-lasting to impact on a significant part of the semester
- Recent burglary, theft or serious car accident
- Separation or divorce – student or parental (provided facts are independently corroborated)
- Major IT issues that are beyond your reasonable control
- Stress related to third-party interventions (such as Local Authorities, Councils, Finance and Loan Companies, political or governmental intervention)

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive. It provides the most common types of extenuating circumstances that may be acceptable.

7.2 Examples of circumstances that would not be considered valid include the following:

- Car broke down, train/bus delayed, or other public transport problems
- Child care problems which could have been anticipated
- Pregnancy (unless specific complications)
- Accidents or illness affecting relatives or friends (unless very serious or the student is the sole carer)
- Unspecified anxiety, mild depression or examination stress
- Cough, cold, sore throat, minor viral infection, unless the illness was at its peak at the time of the examination or deadline and can be supported with medical evidence
- Financial problems that are within the control of individual students
- Holidays, house moves, family celebrations or other events the student either has control of or may choose not to participate in
- Computer problems, corrupt data, printer failure, etc.
- Problems with postal delivery
- Time management problems (for example, competing deadlines)
- Appointments (legal, medical, etc.) which could be rearranged

- Sporting or recreational commitments
- Social activities such as parties, visits by friends

The above list is not meant to be exhaustive and should be taken as an indication of the types of circumstances that would not be acceptable as extenuating.

If there was some kind of disruption in an examination, such as excessive noise, poor lighting, noise from other students, such conditions will be reported to the Academic Dean or Principal. Account will be taken of any such disruptive examination conditions at the appropriate Assessment Board.

8 How are extenuating circumstances judged?

In considering your case your Cohort Leader or Programme Leader will determine whether the extenuating circumstances cited by you are genuine circumstances beyond your control or ability to foresee, and which are likely to seriously impair your assessed work. Account will be taken of:

- the severity of the problem
- the length of time the problem lasted
- the closeness in time of the circumstances to the assessed task(s)
- the supporting evidence

Your Cohort Leader or Programme Leader may consult Unit Leaders, lecturers, the Student Support Officer, Academic Dean and professional services staff in order to gain a full picture of student ability and welfare in reaching a conclusion.

9 Action that Regent College London can take

Extenuating circumstances cannot be used as a reason to raise grades, waive pass requirements of individual units/modules, reduce the requirements for progression, or raise the classification or overall mark for an award.

If the College does decide that your application is valid, you will be granted an extension or permitted a deferral so that you can take the assessment at the next appropriate opportunity. A deferred assessment, whether coursework or examination, will be marked as a first attempt, in which case the assessment will be awarded a grade reflecting its full worth. Where an extension or deferral is permitted for resubmission attempts, the grading will reflect the agreed conditions of the resubmission.

If your request is refused, you must attempt the assessment. If you do not make an attempt a non-submission will be recorded.

The College has the right to reject applications for extension and/or deferral of assessment tasks that do not relate in time to the assessment concerned, or are not supported by adequate third party evidence.

10 Data Protection Act 2018

By submitting an application request for an extension or deferral on the grounds of extenuating circumstances you are agreeing to Regent College London holding this personal data for the purposes of processing and deciding on the extension or deferral request.

11 Unauthorised late submission of coursework

Work submitted late (where an extension or deferral has not been granted) will automatically be recorded as a non-submission.

Higher National students -

- You will be referred for the assessment and have one further opportunity to attempt and pass the assessment.
- The grade that can be awarded will be in accordance with Pearson BTEC regulations and will be at pass level only.
- For students who have been granted an extension for coursework, if work is submitted after the expiry of the extension, this will automatically be recorded as a non-submission. This means that you will be referred for the assessment and have one further opportunity to attempt and pass the assessment. The grade/mark that can be awarded will be in accordance with Pearson BTEC regulations and will be at a pass level only.

University partner students -

- You should communicate with your Director of Studies and they will advise you in accordance with the appropriate University policies and procedures.

12 Summary

- Requests for extensions and deferrals of assessment tasks can only be made by submitting a completed Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF).
- Only the Cohort Leader or Programme Leader, as designated in the above procedure, is authorised to grant extensions or deferrals.
- The Cohort Leader or Programme Leader may grant an extension for individual students providing the ECF plus supporting third party evidence is submitted and the submission is deemed valid.
- For extensions for coursework for a longer time (usually more than 3 weeks) a deferral may be considered. Deferral of an examination or coursework can only be granted by the Programme Leader. The Programme Leader must deem the ECF and supporting third party evidence to be valid in order to grant an extension or deferral.
- Blanket extensions for a class or all students on a module may be granted only by the Cohort Leader (up to one week) or Programme Leader (more than one week and up to three weeks). Blanket deferrals allowing submission of student work for a whole group at the next appropriate opportunity may be granted also only by the Programme Leader.
- Unauthorised late submission of coursework will be recorded as a non-submission.

<i>Author</i>	<i>Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement</i>
<i>Version</i>	<i>Version 3.3</i>
<i>Update</i>	<i>February 2020</i>
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Academic Board February 2020</i>
<i>Review Date</i>	<i>August 2020</i>

