

Regent College London

Extenuating Circumstances¹

Requests for Extensions and Deferral of Assessment

A Guide for Staff

1 Principles

- 1.1 On occasion students experience events in their lives that may have a significant impact on their ability to complete an assessment task (coursework, project/dissertation or examination). To ensure that assessment at Regent College London (the College) is equitable and fair to all our students it is important to have a sound procedure for granting students coursework extensions or deferrals where circumstances are deemed valid and supported by third party evidence.
- 1.2 If a student hands in a piece of coursework or attends an examination the College takes this as a declaration by the student that they are fit to make an attempt at the assessment. No claim for extenuating circumstances will subsequently be accepted by the College.
- 1.3 If a student hands in a piece of coursework (including a project report or dissertation) or attempts an examination after submitting a claim for deferral using the Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) the claim will be disregarded and the student work marked in the usual way.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 **The only staff authorised to grant an extension or deferral are Cohort leaders and Programme Leaders/Directors of Studies. The details of the extent of the authority of these staff is provided below.**

This short Staff Guide should be read in conjunction with the fuller Guide for Students and the summary chart, which are available on the website and HELP.

2 Definitions

- 2.1 **Extenuating circumstances** are genuine circumstances beyond the student's control or ability to foresee, and which seriously impair the student's ability to undertake and complete an assessment task.

Extenuating circumstances do not excuse a student from completing an assessment task. The student must demonstrate that they have achieved the required and stated learning outcomes to pass each unit/module and meet the course/programme requirements for progression or award.

The student must complete the assessment task or tasks when extenuating circumstances no longer impair or significantly affect their academic performance.

Separate procedures apply to cases where an examination or coursework assignment is affected by exceptional circumstances for all students in a class, cohort, etc. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Disruption in an examination room

¹ Please note that this extenuating circumstances guide and associated documents applies to students enrolled on the Pearson BTEC HND Business programme only. Students registered on our University partner programmes must use the relevant policy, procedures and forms of the University.

- Prolonged absence of a lecturer with insufficient cover

Such events are to be managed by Unit Leaders, Cohort Leaders, Programme Leaders/Directors of Studies, Academic Dean and the Principal.

- 2.2 An **extension** is defined as permission to hand in a piece of coursework after the published deadline and without incurring a penalty. An extension for coursework (including project report or dissertation) may be granted after the published deadline.

Extensions may not be granted by unit leaders, lecturers or project/dissertation supervisors.

If the circumstances of a student are such that despite an extension being granted the extenuating circumstances still prevail and continue seriously to impair performance then a deferral may be applied for.

- 2.3 A **deferral** is defined as permission for a student to delay a particular assessment task for longer, and into the next term/semester. A deferred examination involves taking the equivalent examination at the next opportunity when the module is taught; this would normally, but not always, be in the next semester.

Deferral of coursework means that the student may only be considered for confirmation of grades, progression or award at the next appropriate Assessment Board.

3 Making a request for an extension of a coursework deadline

- 3.1 If a student is unable to submit a piece of coursework by the specified deadline because of extenuating circumstances the student should be advised to contact the Unit/Cohort Leader before the date of the assessment deadline in order to submit an extension request. The student should also be advised to meet with a Student Support Officer who will offer advice and support.
- 3.2 All applications for an extension must be submitted in writing using the Extenuating Circumstances Form. An electronic version of the ECF may be downloaded from the College's website (<http://www.regentcollegelondon.com/our-college/policies/>).

Supporting third party evidence must be provided at the time of making the request for an extension for coursework. Requests submitted after the coursework deadline cannot be considered.

The student is asked to indicate on the ECF how long an extension is being sought. The College is not bound to grant the requested length of extension and will make a judgment over what seems most appropriate given the circumstances and supporting evidence.

The complete ECF together with supporting independent third-party evidence must be submitted to the Programme Leader/Director of Studies. The Programme Leader/Director of Studies may grant an extension if the request is deemed valid and the objective supporting evidence is provided.

- 3.3 When a request for an extension is approved a new submission date will be given to the student. Provided the student hands in the coursework by the extension submission date no penalty will be incurred.

A student who submits coursework after the extension date will be referred as non-submission for that assessment component.

4 Making a request for deferral of an assessment

- 4.1 If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from attending an examination the student may request a deferral of the examination.

- 4.2 If extenuating circumstances indicate that an extension would not be sufficient, a deferral of coursework normally to the next semester may be requested.
- 4.3 All applications for deferral of coursework and/or examination must be made in writing, before the coursework deadline or date of the examination. This must be done using the Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF).
- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances on the day of the submission deadline or examination a student may contact their lecturer or a Student Support Officer if, for example, an accident or personal injury prevents the student from attending the examination or being able to come in to the College to submit the coursework. In such cases the Cohort Leader, Unit Leader or Support Officer will fill in the ECF on behalf of the student and the student will be required to submit independent, supporting evidence as soon as possible after the incident. If a student does not provide independent supporting evidence they will be judged to have been absent and the assessment component will be referred as non-submission.
- 4.5 Students should make a request for deferral as close as possible to the time of the extenuating circumstances and as far in advance of the coursework deadline or date of the examination as possible. Applications for deferral submitted after the coursework deadline or after the date and time of the examination will not be accepted, except where the student can show that circumstances beyond their control and independently evidenced prevented the student from contacting their Cohort/Unit Leader at the time.
- 4.6 Where more than one assessment is affected by extenuating circumstances the request for deferral must be made before the deadline of the first assessment task.
- 4.7 If extenuating circumstances continue beyond the expected period or new extenuating circumstances arise the student must make another request for coursework extension or deferral using the ECF and supplying additional third-party supporting evidence.

5 Extensions for a class or group of students

- 5.1 Extensions for a group, class or cohort of students may only be granted when there are circumstances that have affected all the students' studies. This may be when there has been an absence by a lecturer for a significant period of time where adequate cover has not been provided, where there has been disruption in an examination, or other valid reason where students have been adversely affected through no fault of their own.
- 5.2 A blanket extension may be granted to all students for up to one week by the Cohort Leader and by up to three weeks by the Programme Leader/Director of Studies. A blanket extension beyond three weeks would be rarely permitted. This is mainly to avoid failure to complete the assessment process in readiness for the Assessment Board.
- 5.3 In the special circumstance where students start their programme late in the first term/semester of the programme and for reasons beyond the control of the student, for example, late granting of visa, an extension of one week may be granted by the Programme Leader/Director of Studies. No extension beyond one week may be granted for students starting late on their programme of study.
- 5.4 Whenever a blanket extension is given to a group of students or an extension given to students who begin their studies late during the first term/semester of the course the Programme Leader/Director of Studies must complete the record of Approval for Coursework Extensions for a Group of Students Form. The completed form becomes the record that a blanket extension has been made.

6 Providing information and third-party evidence

- 6.1 In completing the Extenuating Circumstances Form (ECF) the student must provide all relevant facts and complete the form as fully as possible. The student must ensure that they provide the specific submission date and/or examination date, and clearly identify the assessment(s) or examination(s) for which an extension or deferral is being requested.
- 6.2 The student must state on the ECF the date from which the extenuating circumstances affected their study and, if known, the date that normal studies would be able to be pursued. The dates provided must correspond with the third-party independent evidence provided and accompanying the ECF.
- 6.3 The student must explain the impact that the extenuating circumstances have had and are having on their academic performance and ability to study and to complete the assessment task.
- 6.4 Third-party independent evidence includes the following examples:
 - Medical certificate or doctor's note which must bear the GP's stamp and/or be on appropriately headed and official note paper.
 - A letter from a family member 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.
- 6.5 An Extenuating Circumstances Form submitted without any supporting third-party evidence will only be considered for a coursework extension or deferral at the discretion of the Principal.
- 6.6 If the student's extenuating circumstances are of an exceptionally sensitive or personal nature the student may request that only the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Student Support Officer consider the request. The student would need to disclose the circumstances to the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Student Support Officer for the extension or deferral request to be considered. The student could do this either through a face-to-face meeting or by placing the evidence in a sealed envelope, marked 'Private and confidential', addressed to the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Student Support Officer.

7 Valid and invalid circumstances

- 7.1 Examples of extenuating circumstances that might be considered valid:
 - 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)

- 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 meant to be exhaustive but provides the most common types of extenuating circumstances that may be accepted as valid.

7.2 Examples of circumstances that would **not** be considered valid:

- 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 circumstances.

8 Actions that Regent College London can take

- 8.1 If the Cohort Leader or Programme Leader/Director of Studies decides that the student has made a valid application for a coursework extension or deferral the assessment will be marked as a first attempt, in which case the assessment will be awarded a grade reflecting its full value. Where an extension or deferral is permitted for resubmission attempts, the grading will reflect the agreed conditions of the resubmission.
- 8.2 If the student's request for an extension or deferral is refused the student must attempt the assessment. If the student does not attempt the assessment the work required will be considered a non-submission.
- 8.3 The College has the right to reject applications for extension or deferral of assessment tasks that do not relate in time to the assessment concerned, or are not supported by adequate third party evidence.
- 8.4 Extenuating circumstances cannot be used as a reason to raise grades, waive pass requirements of individual units, reduce the requirements for progression, or raise the overall grades or classification for an award.

9 Data Protection Act 2018

- 9.1 In submitting an application for an extension or deferral on the grounds of extenuating circumstances the student is agreeing to Regent College London holding this personal data for the purposes of processing and deciding on the request for an extension or deferral.

10 Unauthorised late submission of coursework

- 10.1 If a student submits a piece of coursework late (where an extension or deferral has not been granted) it will be recorded as a non-submission.
- 10.2 Where a student has been granted an extension or deferral but work is submitted after the expiry of the extension date or after the expiry of the deferral date the work will be recorded as a non-submission.

11 Advice to students

- 11.1 If a student approaches a member of staff concerning making a request for a coursework extension or an assessment (coursework, project/dissertation or examination) deferral you should refer the student to the document *Extenuating Circumstances – Requests for Extensions and Deferral of Assessment: A Guide for Students*. This is available on the website and HELP (VLE).
- 11.2 Advise a student that only the Cohort Leader or Programme Leader/Director of Studies may grant an extension provided the Extenuating Circumstances Form is completed and submitted with independent third-party supporting evidence.
- 11.3 If a student indicates that the circumstances are of a highly personal and sensitive nature that they do not wish to put in writing or disclose to you or another member of staff you should advise the student to arrange to meet with the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Student Support Officer. You should advise the student that the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Student Support Officer will deal carefully and sensitively with the matter and have the best interests of the student in mind at all times.

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