

Extenuating Circumstances Policy

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This policy has been reviewed in line with the Equality Act 2010 which recognises the following categories of individual as Protected Characteristics: Age, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex (gender), Sexual orientation and Disability. We will continue to monitor this policy and to ensure that it has equal access and does not discriminate against anyone, especially any person/s listed under any protected characteristic.

Aim

1. The aim of this policy is to ensure that the College manages extenuating circumstances affecting assessment in a fair, consistent and transparent manner.
2. To provide a clear framework for supporting learners whose ability to complete or perform in assessments is impacted by unforeseen and unavoidable events, while maintaining the integrity of qualifications and ensuring compliance with awarding organisation, regulatory and JCQ requirements.

Context

3. This policy applies to all learners undertaking College-delivered qualifications, including:
 - internally assessed coursework, assignments, projects and practical assessments; and
 - externally assessed examinations and assessments, including Technical Qualifications, T Levels, GCSEs, A Levels and other externally set or externally marked qualifications.
4. The policy covers;
 - requests for extensions to internal assessment deadlines;
 - deferrals of internal assessment submissions where applicable; and
 - applications for special consideration for external assessments submitted to awarding organisations via the College Exams Team.
5. This policy is implemented in accordance with awarding organisation requirements and applies across all curriculum areas.
6. For the purpose of this policy:
 - **Extenuating circumstances** are unforeseen, unavoidable events outside a learner's control that have a significant adverse impact on their ability to complete or perform in an assessment.
 - **Extension** refers to an agreed adjustment to an internal assessment deadline, where permitted by the relevant awarding organisation.
 - **Deferral** refers to approval for an assessment to be taken at the next available opportunity, where permitted by awarding organisation requirements.

- **Special consideration** refers to an adjustment applied by an awarding organisation following an external assessment where a learner has been disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control.

Requirements

7. The College will ensure that all decisions:

- are fair, consistent and evidence-based;
- are applied on a case-by-case basis;
- are proportionate to the impact of the circumstances;
- comply fully with awarding organisation, regulatory and JCQ requirements;
- do not compromise the integrity or validity of assessment decisions; and
- are accurately recorded for quality assurance and audit purposes.

Approval is not automatic and will always be subject to awarding organisation requirements, supporting evidence and timing of the request.

8. Where learners are unable to meet an internal assessment deadline due to extenuating circumstances, they must notify their tutor or assessor as soon as possible and submit a request supported by appropriate evidence.

Requests should normally be made before the assessment deadline. Retrospective requests may be considered only where there is a valid reason.

All decisions relating to internal assessments will be made by the IQA (Internal Quality Assurer) or nominated authorised person, always ensuring compliance with awarding organisation requirements. Note that Awarding organisations may often have differing policies and procedures.

Outcomes may include:

- an extension to the deadline;
 - a deferral to the next assessment opportunity; or
 - refusal where criteria are not met in line with awarding organisation rules.
9. For externally assessed examinations and assessments, learners must inform the College immediately if circumstances may affect their participation or performance.

The Exams Team is responsible for:

- determining eligibility in line with awarding organisation requirements;

- advising on and validating required evidence;
- submitting applications for special consideration; and
- maintaining full records in line with awarding organisation regulations.

All applications are submitted strictly in accordance with awarding organisation procedures. Final decisions rest solely with the awarding organisation and cannot be guaranteed or altered by the College.

10. All applications must be supported by relevant, sufficient and up to date evidence demonstrating the impact of the circumstances at the time of assessment.

Examples may include:

- medical evidence;
- hospital or GP documentation;
- bereavement confirmation;
- police or legal documentation;
- evidence from external agencies or support services.

Applications may be declined where evidence is insufficient or where circumstances do not meet awarding organisation criteria.

False, misleading or fraudulent claims will be treated as academic misconduct and may be referred under College disciplinary procedures.

11. All information will be handled sensitively and confidentially in line with GDPR legislation. Information will only be shared with staff involved in administering or approving the request and where required to meet awarding organisation requirements

12. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Learners** are responsible for submitting timely requests in writing, providing appropriate evidence.
- **Teaching staff** are responsible for advising learners, supporting applications and escalating where appropriate.
- **IQA (Internal Quality Assurer)** is responsible for reviewing and approving internal assessment-related requests, ensuring decisions are consistent and compliant with awarding organisation requirements.

- **Exams Team** is responsible for managing all external assessment applications and ensuring compliance with awarding organisation regulations.
 - **The Quality Assurance Team** may support escalation of complex or exceptional cases.
14. Late requests will only be considered where there is a valid reason for delay and appropriate supporting evidence is provided. Retrospective applications for external assessments will only be submitted where permitted under awarding organisation requirements.
 15. Complex or disputed cases may be escalated to the Head of School or Quality Team to ensure consistent application of awarding organisation requirements and College policy.
 16. All requests, evidence, decisions and outcomes will be recorded and stored securely in accordance GDPR legislation, College retention schedules and awarding organisation requirements.
 17. Learners may appeal where they believe:
 - the policy has not been applied correctly;
 - relevant evidence has not been considered; or
 - there has been a procedural error.

Appeals will be managed in accordance with the College Appeals Policy.

Related Policies

18. This policy should be read in conjunction with:
 - Appeals Policy
 - Malpractice and Maladministration Policy
 - Plagiarism, Cheating and Collusion Policy
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Assessment Policy
 - Internal Quality Assurance Policy