

## Higher Education Extenuating Circumstances Policy

### 1. What are extenuating circumstances?

1.1 Extenuating circumstances are short-term events that happen in day-to-day life that you could not have anticipated and are beyond your control. Examples of extenuating circumstances are set out in Section 7. These situations may impact on you being able to undertake or submit an assessment at the given time. We will consider your situation with compassion where these situations happen.

### 2. Options

2.1 It is important to understand that you will need to complete all assessments that form part of your programme. However, if you have extenuating circumstances set out in Section 5 that we approve, and you cannot complete the assessment by the original date, we can support you by offering:

- i. **An extension:** a later date on which to submit your work. An extension will normally be for a period of up to 14 calendar days after the submission date.
- ii. **A deferral:** a later date on which you can take or submit your assessment. The later date will depend upon the nature of the assessment, the programme structure and your extenuating circumstances.

2.2 Extensions or deferrals are not automatic. We will need to consider and approve your request to ensure parity of treatment.

### 3. Actions you must take

3.1 For your request to be considered, you will need to complete an [Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) before the assessment date to tell us about your circumstances and if you are seeking a deadline extension or a deferral of your assessment task/s.

3.2 If you are following an online or on-campus postgraduate programme, you should ask your Student Success Coordinator for advice if you are not sure what type of request you should be making. If you are following an apprenticeship programme, you should ask your Personal Tutor.

3.3 Information about supporting documents you need to provide with your request is set out in Section 10.

3.4 Please talk to your Student Success Coordinator/Personal Tutor, or another member of staff you feel comfortable talking to, if you have any concerns about sharing your extenuating circumstances in a formal request, for example, if your situation is sensitive or complex. You will still need to make the formal request, but colleagues can provide you with support.

3.5 If you are unable to complete the [Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) due to serious circumstances such as being admitted to hospital or experiencing a significant mental health condition, a family member or friend must contact your Student Success Coordinator/Personal Tutor to inform us of your situation so that we can provide relevant support.

3.6 We expect you to be honest about your extenuating circumstances, for example, not saying you have a challenging situation when you do not or submitting fraudulent supporting information. Doing so means that you are attempting to gain an advantage over other students. We may use the Student Disciplinary Procedure if we find potential or actual evidence of you acting dishonestly.

## 4. Requests after an assessment has taken place

4.1 We do not normally accept requests **after** an assessment has taken place unless there is evidence to show that you have fallen ill during an examination or that there is evidence of why you were unable to submit a request before the assessment took place. You will need to complete the [Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) to make a request.

## 5. If you have agreed reasonable adjustments

5.1 If we have agreed reasonable adjustments with you in response to an on-going health condition or a learning disability, it is important to note that you should not normally submit an Extenuating Circumstances application for issues that are already addressed by those adjustments. An application will only be considered if there has been a significant change in your circumstances, such as a flare-up, deterioration, or new condition that is not covered by your existing adjustments. In such cases, you will need to complete the [Extenuating Circumstances Form](#) so that we are aware of the additional impact and any further support required.

5.2 **Approval will be needed:** if the reason for your request **is different** to the nature of your condition covered by your reasonable adjustments. If the member of staff receiving your request is unsure whether your situation needs approval they will liaise with the Student Support team.

## 6. Examples of Extenuating Circumstances

6.1 Examples of extenuating circumstances **we will** consider for extensions or deferrals include:

Category	Examples of Extenuating Circumstances
Health and Medical	Minor illness (e.g., flu), significant health challenges or injuries, hospitalisation, flare-ups of ongoing conditions, medication changes, medium/long-term treatment, maternity complications, gender reassignment complications
Family and Personal Emergencies	Death or serious illness of close family/friend, unexpected caring responsibilities, relationship breakdown, homelessness or risk, significant financial problems, threat of deportation

<b>Legal and Official Obligations</b>	Jury duty, witness in court
<b>Safety and Crime-Related</b>	Assault, harassment, domestic abuse, hate crime, witnessing crime impacting daily life, other crime-related disruptions
<b>Other Unforeseen Circumstances</b>	Unexpected work commitments changes, complete transport shutdowns, other significant unexpected circumstances

6.2 You should talk to your Student Success Coordinator/Personal Tutor if you are unsure about whether your circumstances could be considered as extenuating.

6.3 In some situations, the nature of your circumstances (e.g. longer-term) may mean that we need to consider the support we can offer you beyond an assessment extension or deferral. We will talk with you if you may need more extended types of support.

6.4 Examples of extenuating circumstances we will **not** normally consider include the list below. The reason we do not accept them is because they are not unexpected and can be accommodated in everyday life by taking other actions within your control:

- i. Not backing up your work so you can access it in the event of e.g. laptop failure
- ii. Not understanding or being unaware of regulations, policies and procedures
- iii. Religious festivals or events which are in the calendar
- iv. Holidays
- v. Other circumstances within your control

6.5 You can seek advice from your Student Success Coordinator/Personal Tutor if you are experiencing challenges with matters such as time management and meeting assessment deadlines.

## **7. Circumstances that are the responsibility of Walbrook Institute London (Walbrook)**

7.1 If you are prevented from taking or submitting your assessment on time due to a circumstance or action that is the responsibility of Walbrook, this will be considered under the Assessment Irregularities Policy, and you do not need to act under this Policy.

## **8. Supporting or extra information**

8.1 We will normally require you to provide supporting information if you request an extension or deferral due to extenuating circumstances.

- 8.2 We recognise that it can sometimes be difficult to obtain supporting information in a timely way (e.g. difficult to get a doctor's appointment or a delay in receiving a crime number from the police). We therefore provide you with up to four weeks after submitting your [Extenuating Circumstances form](#) to submit the supporting evidence.
- 8.3 Where it is not possible for you to provide information with your form, we will provide you with a provisional decision about whether we will approve an extension or deferral. Where the provisional decision is to approve that action, we will accept and mark any work submitted as normal, but the mark release will be subject to the receipt of satisfactory evidence.
- 8.4 Where we receive satisfactory evidence, the mark will be confirmed and released. If we do not receive evidence, or the evidence is not satisfactory, then relevant lateness penalties will be applied to the mark prior to its release.
- 8.5 There are certain circumstances, such as short-term illness or urgent caring responsibilities, where it may not be possible for you to obtain evidence, and where in a workplace setting you would reasonably expect the right to self-certify. In these circumstances, we will grant an extension of up to seven calendar days, or a deferral to the next earliest opportunity.
- 8.6 We understand that it can be distressing to be asked for 'evidence' in the case of very circumstances such as the death of a close relative, harassment, discrimination or sexual assault. We also understand that it can be very difficult to provide evidence of particularly traumatic events such as war or terrorism. If there are compelling reasons for making an exception, the Chair of the Panel may use their discretion to either suspend the need for you to provide formal evidence or to accept alternative forms of evidence.
- 8.7 All extra information must be provided to us in the English Language using a verified translation. You are liable for covering the cost of any extra or supporting information that is required.

## 9. How we consider your request

- 9.1 Your [extenuating circumstances form](#) is received by the Secretary to the Extenuating Circumstances Panel.
- 9.2 If you are requesting an extension of up to 14 calendar days, they will liaise with the relevant academic lead for your programme, who will consider your request.
- 9.3 If you need longer than 14 calendar days, are seeking a deferral, or your circumstances are more complex and/or apply to more than one assessment, the request will be considered by the Chair of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. On occasion, the Chair may consult with the wider membership of the Panel, which is made up of experienced academic and professional services members of staff.
- 9.4 Decision-making about your case will focus on your individual circumstances. Where a case is particularly complex, decision-making may also be informed by actions that have been taken in previous cases across time to ensure consistency. All decisions will be documented confidentially.

## 10. Telling you about our decision

- 10.1 We recognise that it is important to provide you with a decision as quickly as possible and we will normally do so in writing within seven calendar days. We will notify you in advance if it is going to take us longer to reach a decision.
- 10.2 Where we approve your request, we will confirm the new date for the submission or sitting of the assessment. The schedule will depend upon the nature of the assessment, the programme structure and your extenuating circumstances.
- 10.3 On occasion, it may be necessary for us to ask you to complete a different assessment task if it is not possible to create the original assessment conditions.
- 10.4 If you meet the required grounds, you may appeal a rejection decision by following the Student Appeals Policy.

## 11. How we record information and decisions

- 11.1 We will keep a record of all extenuating circumstances requests and decisions. The Assessment Board that considers your results will receive information about the fact that you had an extension or deferral approved, but it will not be given information about the specific nature of your circumstances.
- 11.2 We may use records to inform individual offers for additional support, for example where you make numerous applications within a year, or where you are frequently self-certifying for short term illness.

## 12. Any questions?

- 12.1 Please contact the Quality, Policy and Regulations team or the named contacts in this document.

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