

UCP-ASS006 Higher Education Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedures

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 University Centre Peterborough (UCP) requires students to submit work on, or before the published hand-in dates. All students have a responsibility to balance their workloads, to ensure they submit work for assessment by the set date of the assessment.
- 1.2 However, UCP recognises that students may from time to time suffer from serious, sudden and unforeseen circumstances which were beyond a student's control which:
- prevented them from undertaking an assessment task (e.g., were unable to attend an examination, give a presentation or submit a coursework assignment) OR
 - adversely impaired their performance when undertaking an assessment task (e.g., they became ill during an examination).
- Such events are referred to as extensions or extenuating circumstances (ECs).
- 1.3 This policy outlines the procedure to be followed when a student submits a request for extenuating circumstances to be considered.
- 1.4 The purpose is to have a clear procedure that will:
- a) apply a uniformity and consistency of treatment across UCP
 - b) provide clear guidance on the process to be followed when a student requests extenuating circumstance
 - c) enable up-to-date student assessment information to be available
 - d) serve as a UCP procedure statement to interested third parties
 - e) enable accurate data to be provided for statistical and audit purposes

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies exclusively to all Higher Education provision offered by UCP. This also applies to sub contractual provision.

3. RELATED DOCUMENTS

IEG-GDPR01 Data Protection Policy

UCP-EXM001 Higher Education Examination Policy

UCP-ASS005 Higher Education Academic Appeal Policy

UCP-ASS002 Higher Education Security of Summative Assessment Policy

Awarding Body Regulation:

- The Open University: [Regulations for Validated Awards](#)
- Bishop Grosseteste University: <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/about-bgu/policies-and-procedures>

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 The Academic Director has overall responsibility for the procedure, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to those identified:

Current Students

- are responsible for submitting a claim for short-term/long-term extensions, or extenuating circumstances within 2 working days of an assessment due date (or providing valid evidence to support a late claim)

UCP Student Adviser/ Support Officer

- is responsible for providing advice and guidance to students about the process of extensions or claiming extenuating circumstances.
- authorising short-term or long-term extensions
- submitting students EC claim to academicoffice@ucp.ac.uk prior to the Extenuating Circumstance Panel Meeting.

UCP Academic Office

- is responsible for maintaining the EC procedure.
- Chairing the Extenuating Circumstance Panel.
- Tracking receipt of students EC claims and evidence.
- Keeping all students claims and evidence secure.
- Updating student records and communicating the outcome of an EC claim to the student.

5. RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 This policy is required to ensure that correct procedures are in place and are followed.

Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy

- 5.2 Failure to adhere to this policy could lead to academic failure of students, complaints and in extreme cases, legal action.

Staff training needed

- 5.3 All staff involved in this procedure are required to undertake annual training delivered by the Academic Office to outline the process to which they need to adhere. This training will be enhanced by annual updates provided on procedural requirements which will be delivered by the Academic Office.

6. DATA PROTECTION

- 6.1 UCP complies with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act, 2018. As such, applicants' and student data are treated as confidential by all staff involved in this process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. However, the Act requires UCP to release certain information to UK authorities upon request in order to assist those authorities with the prevention and detection of fraud or other crimes. We will release the requested information on receipt of an appropriate request from UK authorities such as (but not limited to) the police, Home Office (for immigration and related matters), local authorities, and the Department for Work and Pensions.

- 6.2 UCP may use anonymised data collected as part of a student extenuating circumstance request:
- internally for reporting, evaluation, learning and training; and
 - externally for discussion with regulators in the higher education sector.

PROCEDURE

7. Terminology used

7.1 Extenuating Circumstance

The process by which allowance is made for any serious adverse circumstances of limited duration which could not reasonably have been foreseen, and which may have seriously affected a student's performance in an assessment element(s) (including an element submitted for re-assessment). Such circumstances should be current, unanticipated and beyond a student's control rather than disadvantageous conditions experienced throughout their studies.

7.2 Short-Term Extension

An approved extension to a submission deadline of up to five working days (exceptionally up to ten working days) granted in response to short-term, unforeseen circumstances that prevent timely submission.

7.3 Long-Term Extension

An exceptional extension of more than ten working days to a submission deadline, granted in response to acute or unforeseen circumstances. These are not intended as ongoing adjustments for permanent conditions.

7.4 Long-Term/Chronic Conditions

Ongoing or permanent conditions (e.g., disabilities, diagnosed health conditions) are not normally considered through the Extenuating Circumstance or Extension processes, unless there is evidence of a temporary worsening (exacerbation) of the condition at the relevant time. Students with long-term conditions should normally work with Student Support to put in place an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

- 7.5.1 Working days are defined by UCP as the days of the week UCP is open for business. For example, Monday to Friday excluding public holidays and when the building is closed.

10 Support for Students

- 8.1 Students wishing to request consideration of an extension or extenuating circumstance must complete the relevant claim form. It is advisable for students to also meet with a Student Adviser to discuss their circumstances.

- 8.2 A student can make an appointment with a Student Adviser by:

- Peterborough: Visiting the UCP Support Centre, emailing support@ucp.ac.uk or telephoning 01733 214466
- Stamford: emailing support@ucp.ac.uk

- 8.3 Telephone or face-to-face appointments can be arranged if required, but the student has the responsibility to complete the application and provide evidence in support of their claim. The claim can be signed electronically.

- 8.4 In cases where the extenuating circumstance process is likely to exacerbate a student's existing health problem or result in additional stress, a Long-Term Extension may be considered provided the deadline date has not yet passed.

- 8.5 Degree Apprenticeship students cannot request short-term or long-term extensions for elements that form part of their End-Point Assessment (EPA). EPA dates are fixed by the external end-point assessment organisation and cannot be altered by UCP. Students should plan accordingly and seek advice early if they foresee difficulties.

- 8.6 For assessments undertaken as group work, each student remains responsible for their own contribution and will normally receive an individual mark in line with the Group Work Protocol. If a group member experiences circumstances that prevent or limit their participation, that student must submit their own Extension or Extenuating Circumstance (EC) claim with supporting evidence.
- 8.6.1 Where a group member's absence or reduced input significantly affects the group's ability to complete or present the assessment as planned, the group (or the module tutor on their behalf) must inform the Student Adviser as soon as possible. The Student Adviser, in consultation with the HE Manager or Course Leader, will decide whether an extension or alternative arrangement is appropriate for the group.
- 8.6.2 Any agreed changes, including revised deadlines or assessment formats, will be confirmed in writing to all affected students. Students are encouraged to keep a record of meetings and individual contributions to support transparency and fair consideration of any claims.

9. Short-Term Extension Requests

- 9.1 If there is a valid reason why a student cannot meet a submission deadline for a piece of assessed work (e.g., illness), they may request an extension of up to five working days, or exceptionally up to ten working days. Requests must normally be submitted no later than two working days before the original deadline.
- 9.2 Working days are defined by UCP as the days of the week UCP is open for business (Monday to Friday, excluding public holidays and periods when the building is closed).
- 9.3 It is the student's responsibility to submit an Extension Request through the UCP-EXT001 Higher Education Extension Request Procedure (see: www.ucp.ac.uk/supporting-you/ucp-policies).

10 Long-Term Extension Requests

- 10.1 In exceptional circumstances, a student may request an extension beyond the normal ten working days. Such requests should normally be made at least two working days before the deadline but may be considered up to three working days after the deadline in extreme cases.
- 10.2 The same process for requesting an extension applies, but the Student Adviser must consult with the HE Manager or Course Leader.
- 10.3 Long-term extensions over thirty working days are designed only to address extreme situations and will be granted in very rare circumstances.
- 10.4 Teaching staff are not permitted to authorise long-term extensions.

11 Extenuating Circumstances Claim Deadlines

- 11.1 Extenuating Circumstance (EC) claims are made after the summative submission deadline or scheduled assessment.

11.2 Claims must be submitted no later than five working days after the published (or extended) submission deadline of assessed work, or the date on which an examination or assessment was held.

11.3 Claims should normally be submitted by the student. In exceptional cases (e.g., where the student has been hospitalised), a Student Adviser may submit a claim on the student's behalf.

11.4 Late claims may be accepted. A late claim is defined as one submitted after the standard deadline (five working days after the assessment or submission deadline). In such cases, the student must provide:

- a detailed explanation of the reason for the late submission; and
- supporting documentary evidence.

11.5 If a student has already been discontinued by the Awards/Examination Board, they may not submit an EC claim directly. In such cases, the student must follow the Academic Appeals process if they wish their circumstances to be considered.

12. Criteria for Requests

12.1 Short-Term Extension

An extension claim should be used to support students whose academic performance has been impacted by short-term, unforeseen circumstances.

Acceptable reasons include:

- personal short-term illness;
- short-term illness of a dependent or someone for whom the student has caring responsibility;
- bereavement of a close relative or significant other (which in an employment context would result in compassionate leave);
- other reasons considered acceptable by the Student Adviser.

The following are not acceptable reasons:

- academic workload;
- misreading of submission instructions or deadlines;
- technical failures for which the student is responsible (e.g., lost files, no backup, printing issues);
- unauthorised absences (e.g., holidays during teaching or assessment periods).

12.2. Long-Term Extension

Long-term extensions are authorised on a case-by-case basis, with supporting evidence and consideration of the impact of circumstances. The criteria used for short-term extensions or extenuating circumstances may also apply.

When determining extended deadlines, the Student Adviser (in consultation with the HE Manager or Course Leader) may consider the timing of an Exam Board if it could disadvantage the student.

12.3 Extenuating Circumstances

Extenuating Circumstance claims (late or on-time) cannot be made against an assessment element where an assessment offence penalty has been applied; such claims are automatically void. See Section 13: Evidence in Support of EC Claims for further details.

Commonly rejected grounds include:

- retrospective or unsupported medical evidence
- medical circumstances outside the relevant assessment period
- minor ailments (e.g., colds)
- foreseeable or preventable issues (e.g., holidays, financial difficulties, lack of planning, IT failures)
- late disclosure without compelling reason
- lack of awareness of regulations or deadlines

13 Evidence in support of EC Claims

A non-exhaustive list of examples of evidence accepted in support of extenuating circumstance claims:

• Extenuating Circumstance	• Evidence Required
• Bereavement - the recent death, or serious illness, of a close family member, a friend or person for whom the student has a responsibility of care;	• Letter from next of kin, an Order of Service, legal document or death certificate. • If the student has a different last name to the deceased, please provide evidence of the relationship with the deceased.
• Serious personal illness which is not a permanent condition • (of a nature which in an employment context would have led to an absence on sick leave).e.g. • Neurological (e.g., concussion, migraine, blackouts, seizure, severe pain) • Ear/eye (e.g., eye, ear infections, tinnitus, vertigo) • Respiratory (e.g., asthma attack, chest infection/pneumonia) • Digestive (e.g., stomach upset, diarrhoea, food poisoning, vomiting / nausea) • Genito-urinary (e.g., U.T.I.) • Musculo skeletal (e.g., severe back pain, broken bone)	• Email/letter from health care professional confirming that the illness has had an impact on your ability to study at the time of the assessment/s being claimed.

• Infectious diseases (e.g., chicken pox, flu, swine flu, measles, mumps, meningitis) • Other medical conditions (e.g., severe allergic reaction, severe toothache, panic attacks) • Pregnancy related condition	
• Evidence of a long term, fluctuating health condition/ disability	• ILP or email/letter from health care professional confirming any diagnoses/ incidents with dates. • <i>A disability which emerges during a student's studies may be considered under the extenuating circumstance process at the first assessment point after it emerges. Following diagnosis and assessment of the effects of the condition UCP will make allowance and in doing so enables the student to be assessed on the same basis as other students.</i>
• Significant worsening in any adverse personal/ family/ welfare circumstances	
• Caring responsibilities e.g., where normal caring arrangements temporarily break down	• Email/letter from organised carers to confirm the breakdown in normal arrangements e.g., school, nursery, care home.

Where a request for Extenuating Circumstance to be considered is submitted late (more than 5 working days after the submission deadline) a full explanation, and any available evidence, of the reason for the lateness must be provided. Without an explanation the claim will not be considered. A non-exhaustive list of examples of evidence accepted in support of late extenuating circumstance applications:

- ✓ Confirmed severe mental health issues.
- ✓ Illness which has led to confirmed hospitalisation of the student and prevented the submission of an extenuating circumstance application.

14 Request for Supporting Evidence

- 14.1 A Student Adviser will request evidence from a student to support Extenuating Circumstance requests.
- 14.2 Medical evidence (e.g. a note from a doctor or other healthcare professional confirming the illness or incident during the period in which it was apparent) will be sought for Extenuating Circumstance requests made on medical grounds.
- 14.3 If supporting evidence is required but not available at the time the student submits their request, the Student Adviser must inform them that they have five working days to provide it. If it is not received by this deadline the request is automatically rejected.

15 Extenuating Circumstances Panel

The Extenuating Circumstance Panel meets monthly to review claims received at least five working days in advance of the meeting.

Panel Membership

- Academic Officer (Chair)
- Three HE Managers (including one from the student's Faculty)

Responsibilities of the Panel

- Ensure students are fully aware of the EC process and when/how to apply.
- Consider all claims for ECs and determine outcomes fairly and consistently.
- Confirm that claims are current, unanticipated, and beyond the student's control.
- Ensure students with long-term or permanent conditions are directed to Student Support for Individual Learning Plans (ILPs).

Process

1. The faculty representative presents claim on behalf of the student.
2. The Panel reviews the claim against two criteria:
 - the basis of the claim is an acceptable ground for an EC;
 - the claim is supported by documentary evidence.
3. Cases may be adjourned if further information is required. Students will be contacted and given a deadline for submission. If information is not provided, the claim will not be granted.
4. Claims are considered confidentially and without knowledge of student marks.
5. Decisions are made based on the severity, duration, and impact of the circumstances.

Decisions and Outcomes

- Claims may be upheld, rejected, or adjourned.
- If upheld, possible outcomes include:
 - permission for a further assessment attempt;
 - waiving late submission penalties;
 - allowing the student to decide whether to retake an assessment they already passed.
- Students are informed of the decision in writing by email within 10 working days of the Panel meeting, with reasons provided if a claim is not upheld.

Reporting

- The Panel reports outcomes to the relevant Exam Board (OU awards) or Assessment Panel (Pearson awards).
- The Academic Officer records decisions, updates student records, and ensures anonymised data is available for evaluation and quality assurance.

16. Panel Decision Making

- I. Applications for Extenuating Circumstances (ECs) are considered on an individual basis, considering any previous applications submitted by the student.
- II. Each claim is assessed against two criteria:
- III. the basis of the claim must be an acceptable ground for ECs; and
- IV. the claim must be supported by appropriate documentary evidence (e.g., a medical certificate, letter from a healthcare professional, or death certificate). Evidence should accompany the claim wherever practicable.
- V. Claims are only considered if both criteria are satisfied.
- VI. All claims are reviewed confidentially by the Panel, without knowledge of student marks, to ensure impartiality.
- VII. For late claims, the Panel first determines whether the student has provided a valid, evidenced reason for missing the standard submission deadline. Lack of

awareness of regulations or deliberately waiting for results before submitting a claim are not considered valid reasons.

- VIII. If no valid reason is provided, the claim will be rejected. If a valid, evidenced reason is accepted, the Panel will then consider the details of the claim.
- IX. Students are notified of decisions in writing via email and ProPortal. Where claims are rejected, reasons must be clearly explained.
- X. If a claim is upheld, one of the following outcomes may be applied:
- XI. If the student has already taken the assessment and achieved a pass mark, they may accept or decline a further attempt. If no response is received by the agreed date, the offer will be withdrawn.
- XII. The student may be granted a further assessment attempt, as determined by the Exam Board.
- XIII. Late submission penalties may be waived.

17. Recording of Extenuating Circumstance Requests and Outcomes

- 17.1 The Academic Officer records the date, reason for the request, and the outcome in the minutes of the Panel meeting. Detailed reasons are kept confidential to members of the Extenuating Circumstance Panel and the Academic Office.
- 17.2 A log of EC claims and outcomes is maintained in anonymised form. This data is used internally for evaluation, staff training, and identifying potential preventative measures, and may also be used externally for reporting and quality assurance.
- 17.3 The Academic Officer updates the student's record on the Student Management System within five working days of the Panel meeting to reflect the outcome of decisions.
- 17.4 Students are informed of the outcome by email to their UCP student account.

18 Appeals Procedure

- 18.1 A student can submit an academic appeal requesting a review of the decision of the Extenuating Circumstances Panel. The student must follow the UCP-ASS005 HE Academic Appeal Policy available from www.ucp.ac.uk/policies/.
- 18.2 If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of this process, they can make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education provided they have been issued with a Completion of Procedures letter. That letter will explain how to submit a complaint and the deadline for doing so is 12 months from the date of the letter.

Appendix 1

Flowchart of student extension request process

